# ALBERTA
# WILD FUR MANAGEMENT
# STUDY GUIDE

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FORESTRY, LANDS
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Fish and Wildlife

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The effort and assistance of many people from government agencies, organizations, educational institutions and individuals is acknowledged and appreciated.

Special recognition is noted for the authors, Don Currie and Emiel Robertson; for the editor and designer, Heather Jean Glebe; for the illustrations provided by Peter Gibson, Darryl Buss and the Fish and Wildlife Division and for the computer layout generated by Marleigh Rouault and Gail Sullivan.

Funding for this project was provided by Alberta Fish and Wildlife Division and Alberta Department of Advanced Education through Alberta Vocational College, Lac La Biche.

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# FOREWORD

The purpose of this study guide is to assist persons preparing to write the Alberta mandatory trapper's test. Successful completion of the test is required to obtain a fur management licence.

This guide is not designed or intended as a substitute or replacement for the Alberta Wild Fur Education Program manual or course.

Abundant illustrations, plain vocabulary, brief explanations, clear headings and large print are used to assist the user.

This guide contains a table of contents, a glossary of terms, and an index, and is made up of six sections:

1. Wild Furbearer Biology
2. Wild Furbearer Management
3. Equipment
4. Wild Fur Area Operations Plan
5. Wild Fur Harvesting
6. Wild Fur Handling

Each section includes clearly stated objectives, an introduction, main body of information and review questions.

The specific objectives listed in this guide are steps toward three major goals:

- **conservation of the wild furbearer resource**
- **humane wild fur harvesting**
- **standardized wild fur handling.**

The accomplishment of these end goals will contribute significantly to the continued viability of the trapping lifestyle.

# WILD FURBEARER BIOLOGY

What is wild furbearer biology?

Why is biology important?

What are the family groupings?

What is the breeding season?

How can furbearers be identified?

What are the animal names?

What do different species eat?

What do their tracks look like?

What affects the rate of reproduction?

What is their range in Alberta?

What kind of habitat do they need?

When do the young leave their mother?

# OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this section you should be able to:

1. Identify the definition of the term "biology of the furbearers".
2. Name the correct family grouping (or classification) of any of the 18 species of wild furbearers in Alberta.
3. Identify why it is important to know the biology of furbearers.
4. Recognize from a picture or description any of the 18 species of wild furbearers found in Alberta.
5. Identify the tracks of any of these animals.
6. Indicate their preferred habitat.
7. Identify their common or choice foods.
8. Indicate the normal breeding season and/or birth dates of any of the species of wild furbearers in Alberta.
9. Identify their normal age of first breeding and average size and frequency of litters.
10. Identify when the young usually leave their mother.
11. Indicate the correct range in Alberta of any of the wild furbearers.

# INTRODUCTION

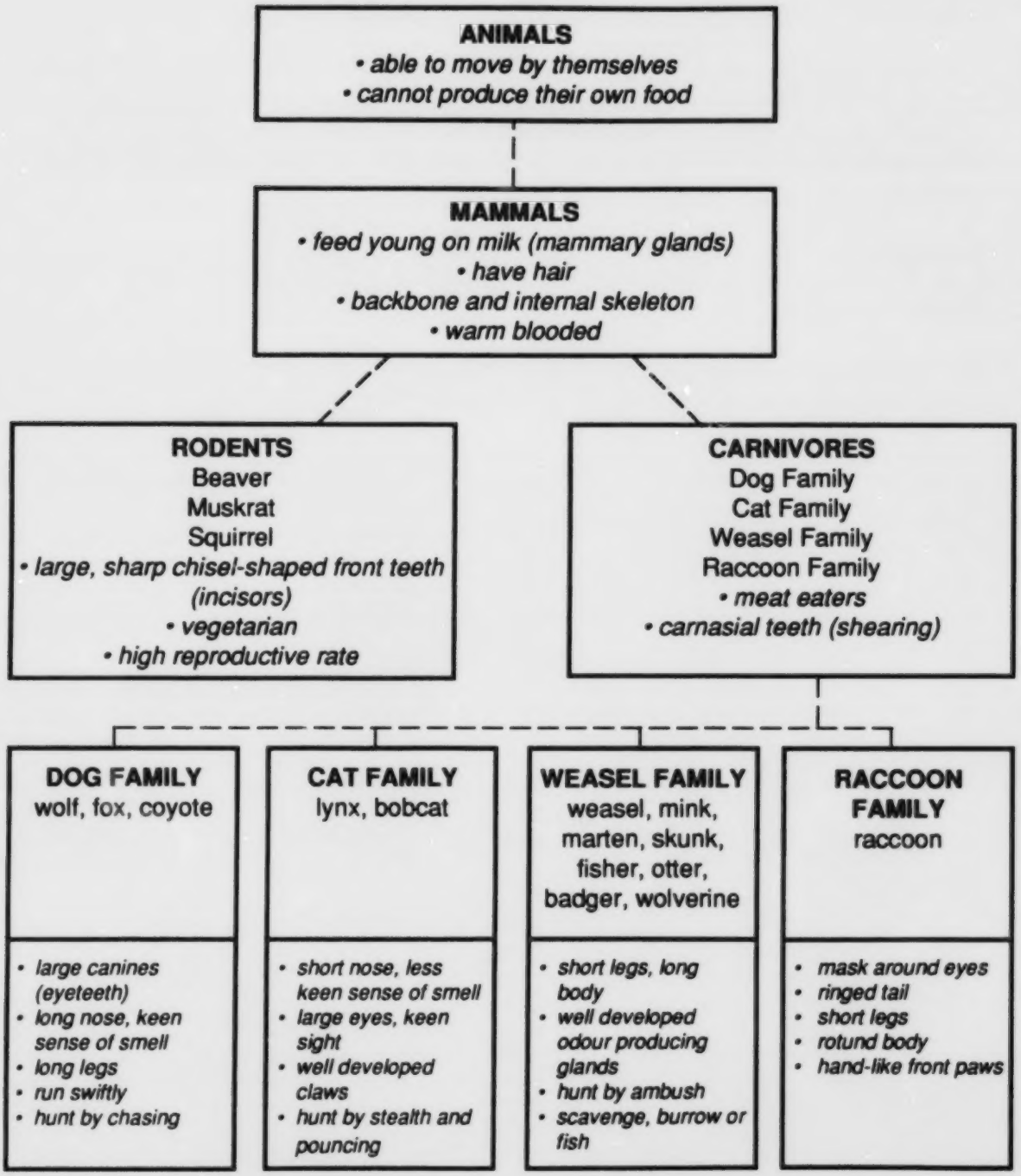
Biology is simply the study of the life history of an animal, including its basic identification, characteristics, habits, food, reproductive cycle, range and habitat requirements.

This study guide provides information on the basic biology of the 18 wild furbearing species found in Alberta. These animals are all mammals (animals which feed their young on milk). They can be divided into two major categories: the carnivores, or meat-eating animals, including the dog, cat, weasel and raccoon families, and the rodents, including the beaver, muskrat and squirrel. (See chart on following page.)

People can learn much about the lives and habits of wildlife from first hand observation, but there is also valuable information which can be learned from the scientific study of these animals.

Wild fur managers who make use of this information will know more about the lives of the animals and will be able to manage them more effectively.

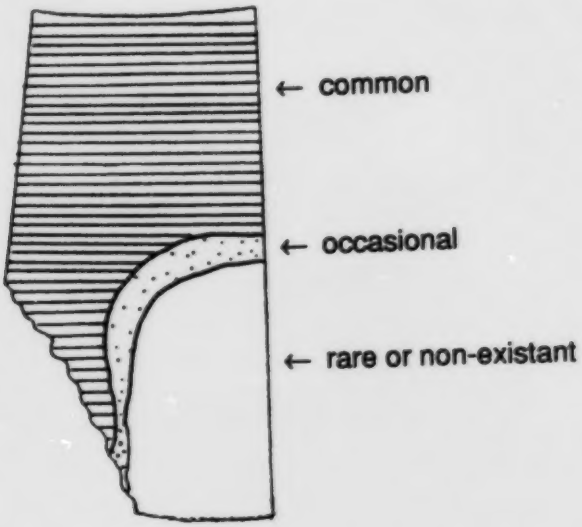
# CLASSIFICATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF FURBEARERS



# KEY TO DIAGRAMS

## RANGE

Map indicates the general ranges each species inhabits. Abundance of the species may vary within the map. A sample is shown below.




## TRACKS

For most species, paw prints in mud are shown, but **not** life size.

Example below are of **muskrat.**

Footprints in mud
right, front and hind

Tracks in snow,
showing tail mark

# RODENT FAMILY - BEAVER *(Castor canadensis)*

***Identification***

Average adult male:
- body length 88 cm (35 in.)
- tail length 28 cm (11 in.)
- shoulder height 30 cm (12 in.)
- weight 23 kg (50 lbs.)

Female, no noticeable difference

***Distinguishing Features***
- Light brown to dark brown fur
- Large, hairless paddle-like tail
- Large, webbed hind feet
- Large, chisel-like front teeth

***Habitat***

*Preferred*
- Slow, winding streams and small lakes with soft banks where willows and aspen grow

*Other*
- Large lakes, dugouts, areas lacking willow and aspen trees

***Denning Needs***
- Digs dens in banks of streams and lakes
- Builds lodges and dams from earth and woody material

***Food***

*Preferred*
- Bark of trembling aspen tree (white poplar)

*Other*
- Bark of willows, birch, black poplar and roots of pond lilies and other aquatic plants

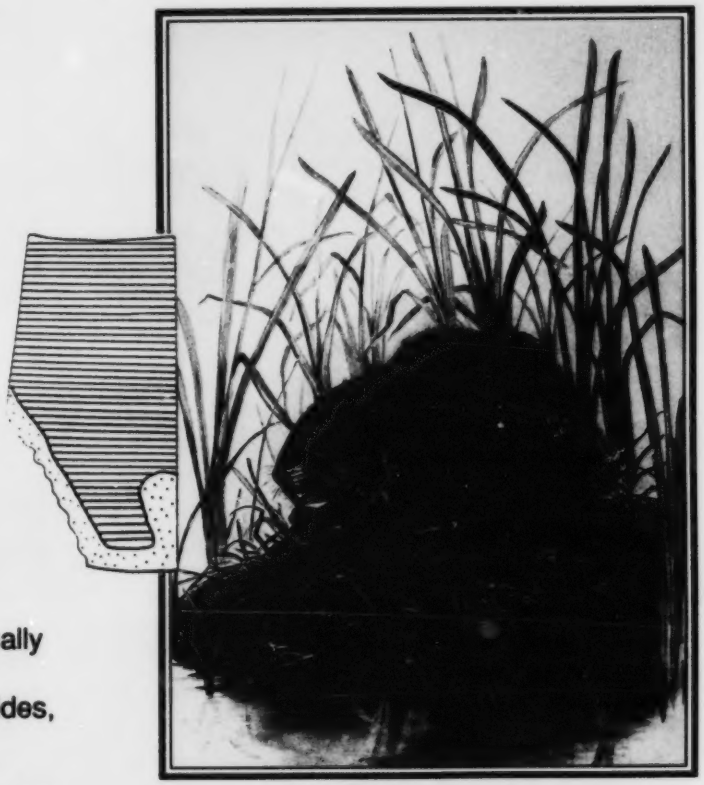
***Life Cycle***
- Breeding, January to March
- Young born April to June
- Usually one litter per year
- Average litter size, 4
- First breeding age, most females 30 months
- Young leave parents after ice break-up when 1 or 2 years old

# RODENT FAMILY - MUSKRAT *(Ondatra zibethicus)*

***Identification***

Average adult male:
- body length 30 cm (12 in.)
- tail length 23 cm (9 in.)
- shoulder height 10 cm (4 in.)
- weight 1.4 kg (3 lbs.)

Female, slightly smaller



***Distinguishing Features***
- Light brown to dark brown fur, usually pale silvery brown on belly
- Almost hairless tail, flattened on sides, narrow and tapered
- Narrow, chisel-like incisors
- Large hind feet with fringes on sides of toes

***Habitat***

*Preferred*
- Marsh with stable water level and good supply of cattails and other water plants
- Water deep enough to prevent freezing to bottom

*Other*
- Slow moving streams, ditches, ponds and lakes

***Denning Needs***
- Digs dens in soft banks of streams and ponds
- Builds lodges from non-woody plant material

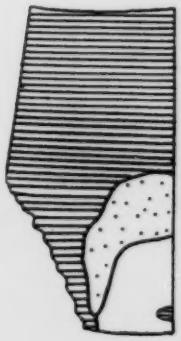
***Food***

*Preferred*
- Water plants, particularly fleshy inner parts of cattail and bullrush roots and stalks; also sweetflag and wild rice

*Other*
- Crayfish and clams

***Life Cycle***
- 2 or 3 litters per year
- Breeding, April to August
- Young born May to September
- Average litter size, 6
- First breeding age, females 1 year
- Young leave mother in fall or the next spring

## RODENT FAMILY - SQUIRREL *(Tamiasciurus hudsonicus)*



***Identification***

Average adult male:
- body length 20 cm (8 in.)
- tail length 12 cm (5 in.)
- shoulder height 7 cm (3 in.)
- weight .2 kg (7 ounces)

Female, slightly smaller

***Distinguishing Features***
- Rusty reddish back with grey belly
- Large bushy tail, curled upward over back when sitting
- Large eye with distinct white ring around outer rim
- Spends much time in trees
- Distinctive chattering sound

***Habitat***

*Preferred*
- White spruce forest

*Other*
- Black spruce and pine forest, mixed forest

***Denning Needs***
- Digs burrows under trees and old piles of cones for winter use
- Rears young in nests built of grass, moss, etc. in evergreen trees
- Also lives in tree cavities such as old woodpecker holes

***Food***

*Preferred*
- Seeds from cones of white spruce and hazelnuts

*Other*
- Seeds from cones of other spruce, fir and pine trees, mushrooms, rose hips, eggs, meat, insects

***Life Cycle***
- Breeding March and April (or June and July)
- Young born May and June (or August and September)
- Usually one litter per year (occasionally two per year)
- Average litter size, 4
- First breeding age, female 10 to 12 months
- Young leave mother at 3 to 4 months old

# DOG FAMILY - COYOTE *(Canis latrans)*

***Identification***

Carnivore

Average adult male:

- body length 100 cm (40 in.)
- tail length 40 cm (16 in.)
- shoulder height 50 cm (20 in.)
- weight 16 kg (35 lbs.)

Female, about 10% smaller

***Distinguishing Features***

- Pale grey to dark brownish-grey body with underbody pale grey to white
- Similar to small German Shepherd type dog
- Long pointed nose, medium sized erect ears

***Habitat***

*Preferred*

- Agricultural areas with frequent small woodlots

*Other*

- Forested areas and around towns and cities

***Denning Needs***

- Digs to make or enlarge holes usually on steep brush-covered banks, for rearing young

***Food***

*Preferred*

- Small mammals such as mice, ground squirrels, rabbits and birds

*Other*

- Domestic livestock, eggs, berries, insects, carrion and deer

***Life Cycle***

- Breeding January to March
- Young born March to May
- One litter per year
- Average litter size, 6
- First breeding age, most females about 10 months
- Young leave parents when 6 to 7 months old but some stay as family units until 18 months

# DOG FAMILY - COLOURED FOX *(Vulpes vulpes)*

***Identification***

Carnivore

Average adult male:

- body length 65 cm (26 in.)
- tail length 40 cm (16 in.)
- shoulder height 35 cm (14 in.)
- weight 5 kg (11 lbs.)

Female, slightly smaller

***Distinguishing Features***

- Three main colour phases - red, cross and silver
- Large bushy tail with white tip
- Small dog-type animal with large erect ears and sharp pointed nose

***Habitat***

*Preferred*

- Edges of fields and pastures in agricultural areas
- Edge areas of forests

*Other*

- Open grasslands, towns and cities

***Denning Needs***

- Digs to make or enlarge holes for rearing young
- Prefers brush-covered slopes and sandy soil
- Avoids areas close to coyotes

***Food***

*Preferred*

- Mice, rabbits

*Other*

- Small animals, birds, fruit, grasshoppers and carrion

***Life Cycle***

- Breeding, January or February
- Young born March or April
- One litter per year
- Average litter size, 5
- First breeding age, females about 10 months
- Young leave mother at about 6 months old

## DOG FAMILY - WOLF *(Canis lupus)*

***Identification***

Carnivore

Average adult male:

- body length 105 cm (42 in.)
- tail length 45 cm (18 in.)
- shoulder height 68 cm (22 in.)
- weight 45 kg (99 lbs.)

Female, about 20% smaller

***Distinguishing Features***

- Wide colour variation, from almost white to black; most are grey with pale grey to white belly
- Large dog type animal with thick rounded ears, large head and thick, heavy neck
- Carries tail straight (unlike husky dog which carries tail curled upwards)
- Usually travel and hunt in packs

***Habitat***

*Preferred*

- Boreal forest away from human habitation, rough and hilly areas

*Other*

- Fringe agricultural areas

***Denning Needs***

- Digs or enlarges holes to rear young
- Prefers sandy, treed slopes near water
- May use abandoned beaver lodges

***Food***

*Preferred*

- Mostly big game animals in winter, wide variety in summer including beaver and calves of big game

*Other*

- Small mammals, birds, fruit and berries, domestic livestock and carrion

***Life Cycle***

- Breeding, January to March
- Young born March to May
- One litter per year
- Average litter size, 6
- First breeding, most females 22 months
- Young usually stay with parents and become part of the pack

# CAT FAMILY - BOBCAT *(Felis rufus)*

***Identification***
Carnivore
Average adult male:
- body length 73 cm (29 in.)
- tail length 15 cm (6 in.)
- shoulder height 55 cm (22 in.)
- weight 13 kg (29 lbs.)

Female, about 35% smaller

***Distinguishing Features***
- Clear dark spots on light grey to brownish coloured fur
- Generally more reddish-brown than lynx
- Tail barred and white underneath
- Ears dark rimmed with white spot on back (shorter ear tuft than lynx)
- Feet smaller and legs shorter than lynx

***Habitat***
*Preferred*
- Thinly treed areas, rocky hillsides and dry coulees

*Other*
- Has adapted to agricultural and populated areas; does well in dry country and logged areas

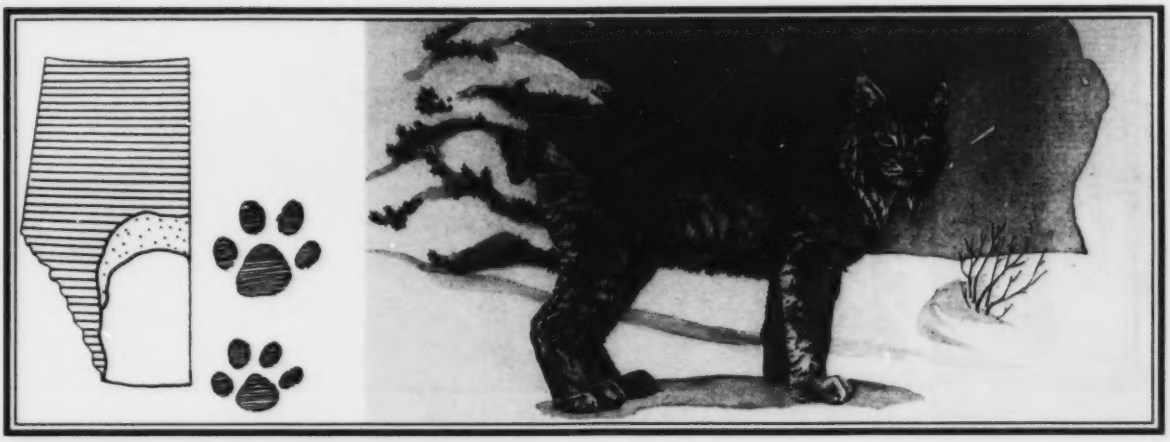
***Denning Needs***
- Rocky crevices and under fallen trees and brush piles

***Food***
*Preferred*
- Cottontail rabbits and mice

*Other*
- Small mammals, birds, insects and deer

***Life Cycle***
- Breeding March and April
- Young born in April and May
- Usually one litter per year
- Average litter size, 3
- First breeding, female 1 year
- Young leave mother when 5 to 7 months old

## CAT FAMILY - LYNX *(Felis lynx)*



***Identification***

Carnivore

Average adult male:

- body length 85 cm (34 in.)
- tail length 10 cm (4 in.)
- shoulder height 58 cm (23 in.)
- weight 10 kg (22 lbs.)

Female, slightly smaller

***Distinguishing Features***

- Silvery grey colour with tan to brownish tinge on legs
- Tail shorter than bobcat, has solid black tip
- Long black ear tufts
- Feet much larger and more furred than bobcat, longer legs (especially the hind legs)

***Habitat***

*Preferred*

- Boreal forest with fallen logs and thick regrowth
- Along banks of streams in rolling terrain

*Other*

- Agricultural areas during food shortage in the forest

***Denning Needs***

- Hollow logs, under fallen trees, heavy thickets, under large stumps

***Food***

*Preferred*

- Snowshoe hare

*Other*

- Birds, small rodents, beaver, eggs, occasionally big game calves

***Life Cycle***

- Breeding February and March
- Young born May and June
- Usually one litter per year
- Average litter size (when food plentiful), 3
- Young leave mother when 10 months old

## WEASEL FAMILY - BADGER *(Taxidea taxus)*

***Identification***

Carnivore

Average adult male:

- body length 60 cm (24 in.)
- tail length 15 cm (6 in.)
- shoulder height 25 cm (10 in.)
- weight 9 kg (20 lbs.)

Female, 25% smaller

***Distinguishing Features***

- Silvery grey body with a creamy tan coloured belly
- White patches on the cheeks
- Black patch in front of ear
- White central stripe from nose to shoulder
- Very long front claws for digging

***Habitat***

*Preferred*

- Open prairie and farmland where digging is easy and ground squirrels abundant

*Other*

- Mixed bush and open country, avoids rocky soils

***Denning Needs***

- Digs dens usually in search of prey (often returns to these dens)
- Makes special dens with more than one entrance, to raise young; dirt mound in front is usually bigger than other dens

***Food***

*Preferred*

- Ground squirrels and pocket gophers

*Other*

- Other small mammals, birds, eggs, snakes, insects

***Life Cycle***

- Breeding, July to September
- Young born March to April
- One litter per year
- Average litter size, 4
- First breeding, females 4 to 6 months
- Young leave mother when 10 to 12 weeks old

## WEASEL FAMILY - FISHER *(Martes pennanti)*

***Identification***

Carnivore

Average adult male:

- body length 63 cm (25 in.)
- tail length 35 cm (14 in.)
- shoulder height 28 cm (11 in.)
- weight 4 kg (9 lbs.)

Female, about 40% smaller

***Distinguishing Features***

- Dark brown to black fur, often grizzled grey colour at head changing to nearly black at hips
- Long, tapered, black, bushy tail
- Short, thick, rounded ears
- Usually has a white patch on throat

***Habitat***

*Preferred*

- Boreal forest

*Other*

- Are adaptable and will use a wide variety of habitats (agricultural areas, etc.) if food available

***Denning Needs***

- Hollow logs and trees
- Under brush piles and fallen trees
- In snow banks

***Food***

*Preferred*

- Porcupine, snowshoe hare, other small rodents and carrion

*Other*

- Birds, eggs, insects, fruits, nuts

***Life Cycle***

- Breeding, March to April (usually breed 8 to 11 days after giving birth)
- Young born March to April
- One litter per year
- Average litter size, 3
- First breeding, female 1 year
- Young leave mother in late summer or fall before first snow (5 to 6 months old)

## WEASEL FAMILY - MARTEN *(Martes americana)*

***Identification***
Carnivore
Average adult male:
- body length 43 cm (17 in.)
- tail length 18 cm (7 in.)
- shoulder height 12 cm (4 1/2 in.)
- weight .730 kg (1 3/4 lbs.)

Female, about 30% smaller

***Distinguishing Features***
- Golden brown to dark brown fur with grey cheek patches
- Usually orange-coloured patches on throat and chest
- Long, black, bushy tail
- Large rounded ears
- No centre foot pad
- Well furred feet

***Habitat***
*Preferred*
- Mature coniferous or mixed wood forest
- Selective cut logging areas
- Avoids clear cut and open areas

*Other*
- Along streams with willow and tall grass on banks

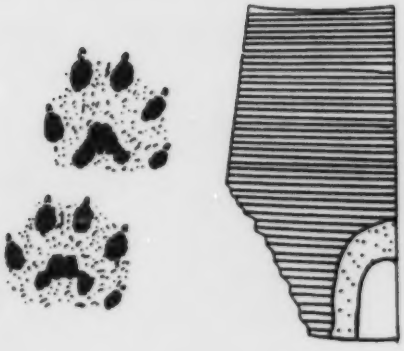
***Denning Needs***
- Hollow trees, hollow logs, brush and rock piles
- Digs dens in snow banks
- Sometimes uses squirrel nests

***Food***
*Preferred*
- Red backed and meadow voles and hares, berries in summer months

*Other*
- Other small rodents and carrion; wide variety of food, but small mammals most important

***Life Cycle***
- Breeding, July to August
- Young born March to April
- One litter per year
- Average litter size, 3
- First breeding, females 15 months
- Young leave mother in late summer and early autumn (5 to 6 months old)

## WEASEL FAMILY - MINK *(Mustela vison)*



***Identification***

Carnivore

Average adult male:

- body length 43 cm (17 in.)
- tail length 19 cm (7 in.)
- shoulder height 10 cm (4 in.)
- weight 1.5 kg (3 lbs.)

Female, 30% smaller

***Distinguishing Features***

- Dark brown almost black fur
- Usually white patch at throat, white line on belly
- Small ears

***Habitat***

*Preferred*

- Areas with abundant water supply, e.g. marshes or slow streams with good cover along edges

*Other*

- Lakes and large rivers

***Denning Needs***

- Muskrat and beaver bank burrows and lodges
- Cavities under trees, rock and brush piles
- Other animal burrows especially near water

***Food***

*Preferred*

- Muskrat, mice, fish, crayfish

*Other*

- Small mammals, frogs, birds, eggs

***Life Cycle***

- Breeding, February to April
- Young born April to May
- One litter per year
- Average litter size, 5
- First breeding age, male and female 10 months
- Young usually leave mother July to September at 3 to 6 months old

## WEASEL FAMILY - OTTER *(Lutra canadensis)*

### *Identification*

Carnivore

Average adult male:

- body length 68 cm (27 in.)
- tail length 45 cm (18 in.)
- shoulder height 25 cm (10 in.)
- weight 10 kg (22 lbs.)

Female, about 20% smaller

### *Distinguishing Features*

- Thick, short, dark brown to black fur with light silvery brown under neck and belly
- Tail is heavy, thick, well furred, tapered
- Webbed feet
- Short, blunt, flattened head with small ears

### *Habitat*

*Preferred*

- Extensive waterways, interconnected small streams and lakes

*Other*

- Beaver dams
- Avoids settled areas and polluted water

### *Denning Needs*

- Beaver bank dens and abandoned lodges
- Log jams and cavities under tree stumps, hollow logs, burrows made by other animals near water

### *Food*

*Preferred*

- Fish and crayfish

*Other*

- Birds, muskrats, frogs, waterfowl, berries

### *Life Cycle*

- Breeding, March to April (usually breed shortly after giving birth)
- Young born March to April
- One litter per year
- Average litter size, 3
- First breeding, female 2 years
- Some young leave mother at 6 months (3 months after weaning), others do not leave mother until 1 year old

# WEASEL FAMILY - STRIPED SKUNK *(Mephitis mephitis)*

***Identification***

Carnivore

Average adult male:

- body length 40 cm (16 in.)
- tail length 30 cm (12 in.)
- shoulder height 28 cm (11 in.)
- weight 3 kg (7 lbs.)

Female, about 20% smaller

***Distinguishing Features***

- Black fur
- Narrow white central stripe from nose to back of head
- Large white stripes along sides of back, joined at neck
- Large, bushy, plumed tail
- Long front claws for digging
- Most powerful odour glands of all the weasel family

***Habitat***

*Preferred*

- Open country and forest edges, agricultural communities and abandoned yards and buildings

*Other*

- Urban areas
- Usually avoids dense forested and wet marshy areas

***Denning Needs***

- Under buildings such as granaries
- Burrows made by other animals
- Brush and rock piles
- Seeks more protected denning sites for winter months

***Food***

*Preferred*

- Eats almost anything: insects, small mammals, eggs, birds, berries, corn, grain

*Other*

- Carrion and garbage, fruits, grasses, weeds

***Life Cycle***

- Breeding, late February or March
- Young born late April to early June
- One litter (occasionally two litters) per year
- Average litter size, 6
- First breeding age, females 10 months
- Young leave mother August or September (3 to 4 months old)

# WEASEL FAMILY - LONG TAILED WEASEL *(Mustela frenata)*

***Identification***

Carnivore

Average adult male:

- body length 25 cm (10 in.)
- tail length 16 cm (6 1/2 in.)
- shoulder height 7 cm (3 in.)
- weight .305 kg (11 ounces)

Female, about 40% smaller

***Distinguishing Features***

- In winter, body and tail white with black tip on tail
- In summer, body and feet brown, upper body parts are yellow/tan
- Long tail, about 2/3 of body length

***Habitat***

*Preferred*

- Open prairie, along waterways and open woodlands

*Other*

- Likes to hunt in stubble fields

*NOTE: The long tailed weasel habitat has been seriously altered in Alberta, therefore* ***very careful management*** *is necessary.*

***Denning Needs***

- Burrows made by other animals
- Under brush and rock piles

***Food***

*Preferred*

- Voles, mice, cottontails, rabbits, chipmunks

*Other*

- Birds, eggs, insects, berries

***Life Cycle***

- Breeding, June to August
- Young born April to May
- One litter per year
- Average litter size, 6
- First breeding, females 2 to 3 months
- Young leave mother in July or August (about 3 months old)

# WEASEL FAMILY - SHORT TAILED WEASEL *(Mustela erminea)*

***Identification***

Carnivore

Average adult male:

- body length 20 cm (8 in.)
- tail length 9 cm (3 1/2 in.)
- shoulder height 6 cm (2 1/2 in.)
- weight .138 kg (5 ounces)

Female, 30% smaller

***Distinguishing Features***

- In winter, body and tail white, black tip on tail
- In summer, brown body, white or yellow feet, black tip on tail
- Tail about 1/3 body length

***Habitat***

*Preferred*

- Forest edges (boreal and mountain forest areas)

*Other*

- Hedges and fence rows in agricultural areas and tundra

***Denning Needs***

- Burrows made by other animals, under brush or rock piles or fallen trees

***Food***

*Preferred*

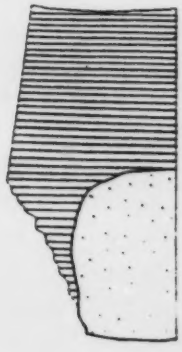
- Voles, mice

*Other*

- Lemmings, snowshoe hares, insects

***Life Cycle***

- Breeding season, adult female late April and May, young female June and July
- Young born in April
- One litter per year
- Average litter size, 6
- First breeding age, female 2 to 3 months
- Young leave mother July and August (about 3 months old)



## WEASEL FAMILY - WOLVERINE *(Gulo gulo)*

***Identification***

Carnivore

Average adult male:

- body length 85 cm (33 in.)
- tail length 22 cm (8 in.)
- shoulder height 35 cm (14 in.)
- weight 14 kg (31 lbs.)

Female, 20% smaller

***Distinguishing Features***

- Long, dark brown fur with black patch in middle of back, pale stripe running from tail along each side to back of the shoulders
- greyish tan coloured patches on throat and chest
- head broad and short
- short bushy tail

***Habitat***

*Preferred*

- Rugged boreal forest along mountains and large hills
- Open tundra

*Other*

- Fringe areas near marshes
- Avoids areas of human activity

***Denning Needs***

- Snow tunnels, uprooted trees, caves and under overhanging banks

***Food***

*Preferred*

- Carrion, small mammals, snowshoe hare, muskrat, birds (grouse, ptarmigan)

*Other*

- Fruits, berries, fish, some big game

***Life Cycle***

- Breeding season June to August
- Young born February to March
- One litter per year (some females only every 2 years)
- Average litter size, 2
- First breeding age, females some at 15 months others at 27 months
- Young leave mother at 1 year

## RACCOON FAMILY - RACCOON *(Procyon lotor)*

***Identification***

Carnivore

Average adult male:

- body length 63 cm (25 in.)
- tail length 25 cm (10 in.)
- shoulder height 35 cm (14 in.)
- weight 8 kg (17 lbs.)

***Distinguishing Features***

- Grizzled grey body colour
- Black face mask
- 4 to 7 black rings around tail
- Hand-like front paws

***Habitat***

*Preferred*

- Agricultural areas with streams and forested areas
- Cities and towns

*Other*

- Areas with less water and heavy unbroken forests

***Denning Needs***

- Tree cavities
- Hollow logs
- Abandoned buildings
- Abandoned burrows

***Food***

*Preferred*

- Vegetables and corn, fruit and berries (eats more meat in spring)

*Other*

- Clams, eggs, birds, crayfish and variety of plants and insects; also garbage

***Life Cycle***

- Breeding, February to June
- Young born April to August
- One litter per year
- Average litter size, 4
- First breeding age, females 10 months
- Young leave mother after 14 months (some stay until 2 years old)

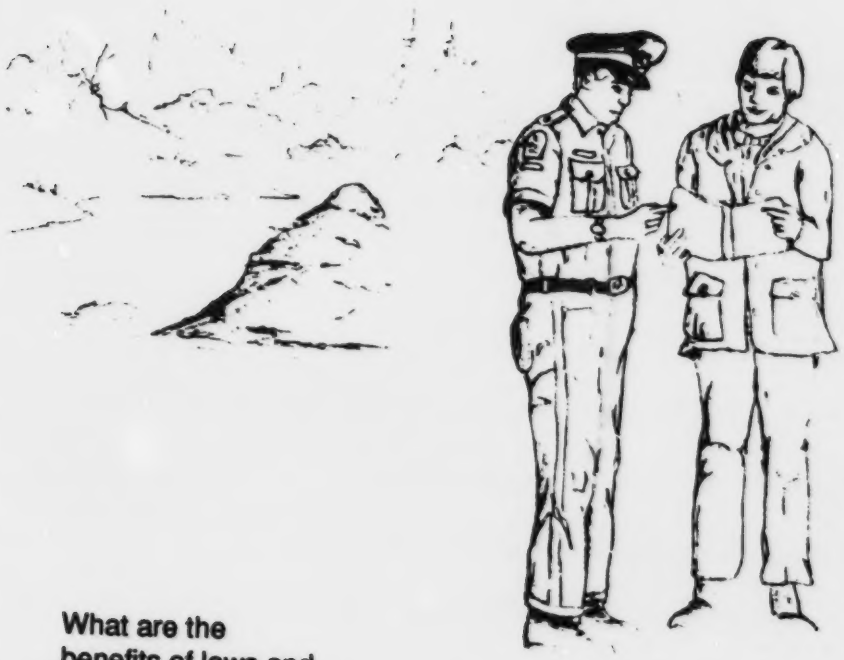
# REVIEW

1. The beaver is part of what family grouping?
2. In what ways do the bobcat and lynx look different?
3. What is the average litter size of the fisher?
4. How much does the average male lynx weigh?
5. What are the colour phases of the fox?
6. What kind of habitat do marten prefer?
7. What kind of homes do muskrat build?
8. What trees do red squirrels like most?
9. Do weasels change colour seasonally?
10. What habitat do wolves prefer in Alberta?
11. What is the beaver's favourite food?
12. Will a bobcat kill a deer?
13. Do red squirrels ever eat meat?
14. How many litters may a muskrat have per year in Alberta?
15. When do young marten leave their mother?

# WILD FURBEARER MANAGEMENT

What is wild furbearer management?

How does the provincial government assist in the management of wild furbearers?



What can individuals do to help manage wild furbearers?

What are the benefits of laws and regulations?

What information is contained in the *Alberta Guide to Trapping*?

# OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this section you should be able to:

1. Define "wild furbearer management".

2. Identify five ways in which the provincial government assists in the management of wild furbearers.

3. Identify four benefits of wild furbearer management laws and regulations.

4. Recognize the regulations and information in the current *Alberta Guide to Trapping* relating to:
   - important changes
   - prohibitions
   - licence types and requirements
   - mandatory registration
   - sale of wildlife
   - exporting
   - accidental capture
   - fur handlers
   - seasons, quotas and management zones
   - primeness of pelts
   - wildlife act and regulations

5. Identify at least five practises that individuals can use to manage wild furbearers.

6. Identify the difference between population levels and trends.

7. Identify why assessing population levels and trends is important.

8. Identify at least three means that can be used to assess population levels and trends.

9. Identify at least three indicators of a health problem in a furbearer population and what actions should be taken.

10. Identify why assessing habitat is important and name at least three typical habitat observations.

11. Identify how to adjust harvest levels or quotas in response to population trends.

12. Name at least four recommended harvesting strategies and at least one benefit of each.

13. Identify two things to avoid and two benefits of winter feeding.

14. Identify at least three benefits of harvesting potential problem animals.

# INTRODUCTION

Wild furbearer management is the use of various means to influence the populations of wild furbearing animals.

Laws and regulations are one of those means. The *Alberta Guide to Trapping* is a summary of the laws and regulations relating to wild furbearer management in Alberta. This guide is updated and published each year and is available at Fish and Wildlife offices throughout the province. It should be reviewed with particular attention to those items listed in the objectives for this section. (See previous page.)

These laws and regulations refer to quotas, seasons, permits, licences and prohibitions which are necessary to ensure the conservation of the renewable furbearer resource.

They also help to achieve other benefits that assure:

- humane use of the wild fur resource
- opportunity for people to share the resource fairly
- proper use of the products of the resource

The provincial government further assists in the management of the resource by:

- monitoring furbearer populations
- enforcing the regulations
- establishing wildlife reserves
- carrying out research and stocking programs

Individuals can help manage furbearers by:

- abiding by the provincial laws and regulations
- assessing the furbearer population levels, trends, health and available habitat
- planning how the harvest will be carried out and adjusting harvest levels and quotas
- maintaining or increasing the furbearer numbers by feeding, stocking or habitat protection and improvement
- setting up and keeping a management record system (refer to the Operations Plan section on page 64 for details)

Co-operation between government and individuals will achieve the best management results.

# HOW INDIVIDUALS CAN HELP MANAGE WILD FURBEARERS

## LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Know and abide by the provincial laws and regulations. Refer to the *Alberta Wildlife Act* and the *Alberta General Wildlife Regulations* for full details.

## ASSESSING POPULATION LEVEL AND TRENDS

Population information is essential to the proper management of an area.

However, it is difficult or impossible to determine the exact population of most species. This is neither necessary nor expected. What is needed is a general idea of the population size, that is, do the animals seem to be abundant, of average occurrence, or scarce? It is also important to determine the population trend. Does the population seem to be increasing, decreasing or remaining stable?

The wild furbearer manager should do these assessments on an ongoing basis as the area is being worked.

He should compare previous and current capture records, along with tracks and other furbearer sign, such as:

- active, squirrel middens (cone piles)
- well maintained beaver lodges, dams and fresh feedbeds or muskrat lodges and push-ups

These are the main indicators of furbearer numbers and variety.

Although a rough estimate of the types and abundance of furbearers in an area can be determined quite quickly by careful observation of tracks and signs, population trends will only become apparent as observations are recorded over a period of time.

This information can then be used to establish personal area specific harvest quotas for each furbearer species. Some furbearer species in Alberta have a maximum quota set by regulation. This is based on information taken from records which indicate that these species required extra protection. Personal area specific quotas must not exceed quotas set by regulations.

## ASSESSING POPULATION HEALTH

Furbearers should be carefully observed in the field or examined during handling for signs of disease, parasites or starvation. Notify the nearest Fish and Wildlife office if you suspect any of these.

Disease, parasites or starvation may indicate that the animal is under stress due to overpopulation or food shortage.

Watch for other evidence of a problem, such as:
- poor habitat conditions
- an overabundance of tracks and signs
- a very skinny animal

Increased harvesting may be necessary in a confirmed case of overpopulation to prevent a possible die-off and loss of the resource.

## ASSESSING HABITAT

The habitat requirements and preferences of the furbearers must be known before the habitat conditions can be properly assessed in any area. (Refer to the Biology section of this study guide for the habitat requirements of each species.)

Maps and aerial photographs will give a good indication of the amount and location of suitable habitat.

Trapping areas should be further examined in the field to check food, water and shelter conditions. This can give you an early warning of population trends. For example, a population increase is likely to follow improving habitat conditions, or a population drop may follow deteriorating conditions.

## ADJUSTING HARVEST LEVELS

Harvesting levels should be adjusted in accordance with present population levels and trends.

In other words, the more abundant a species is, the more it can be harvested. The more scarce it is, the less harvesting pressure should be put on it.

A higher harvest can also be taken when the population trend is increasing or in the early stages of a cycle decline. Harvesting should be reduced or stopped altogether when it appears the population is declining sharply. In the case of a stable population, the harvest take should be maintained at a constant level.

A productive, stable or increasing population will yield a balanced or high percentage of younger animals and a fairly equal number of males and females in the catch.

A declining population will yield mainly older animals and a higher percentage of females. Records should be kept of these observations, otherwise the pattern may not be noticed. This information is an important indication of the population trend and the possible need to adjust or stop the harvesting of a particular furbearer species.

## HARVESTING STRATEGIES

The harvesting of most furbearer species should be done early in the season, that is, in November and December.

The fur is usually at its best at this time and the younger animals are dispersing from the litter and are more easily captured. Many of these animals are surplus to the population and most likely will not survive the winter. The adult breeding stock is also conserved by this measure.

Exceptions to this rule can be made for lynx and muskrat. Lynx should be taken later, from mid-December to late January, as the fur lacks the valuable silver colour earlier in the season. Muskrat are larger and have a heavier pelt later in the season. They can be harvested in March or early April providing there is enough food and water for them to survive.

All available furbearer species which are prime and in season should be harvested simultaneously according to their abundance. This can be done by making sets for a variety of furbearers when working the area. Harvesting in this manner will help to balance furbearer populations and economic returns. It is also more efficient as it saves time, fuel and equipment costs.

Harvest plans should include setting aside reserve areas of suitable size and habitat for each furbearer species found in the area. This is to ensure adequate protection for breeding stock. Large areas usually have some inaccessible places that are not being harvested that year, which will serve this purpose.

Smaller areas may require more careful planning to ensure a sufficient reserve is left unharvested.

Areas to be harvested should have lines laid out with an adequate number of sets. The sets should be removed as soon as there is a noticeable drop in capture success. This practise will also save time, fuel and equipment costs, and preserve the breeding stock.

## WINTER FEEDING

The carcasses of captured animals (particularly beaver) which are not required for bait or human food, should be left in the fur management area as food for furbearers, birds or other animals.

Carcasses in which disease is suspected should not be used in this manner. They should be submitted to the nearest Fish and Wildlife office.

It is unlawful to use the carcasses of domestic animals for feeding or bait on Crown Land, because of the potential to spread disease.

Avoid placing carcasses where they will be readily seen by people. Space them around the area so that animals feeding on them will not be concentrated in one place.

Studies have shown that marten, given extra food during the late winter months when food was scarce, had a higher survival rate and produced more young the following spring. This same pattern probably applies to most furbearers.

## HARVESTING POTENTIAL NUISANCE ANIMALS

Areas close to farm lands should be harvested heavily, reducing potential problem animals. Beaver, in particular, frequently cause problems by damming culverts and flooding roads and fields.

It is important to watch for places where these situations may develop so the animals may be harvested when they are prime and before they become a problem. Otherwise these animals will probably be killed in the spring or summer and their value will be lost.

Harvesting these animals early is good management and develops good public relations.

# REVIEW

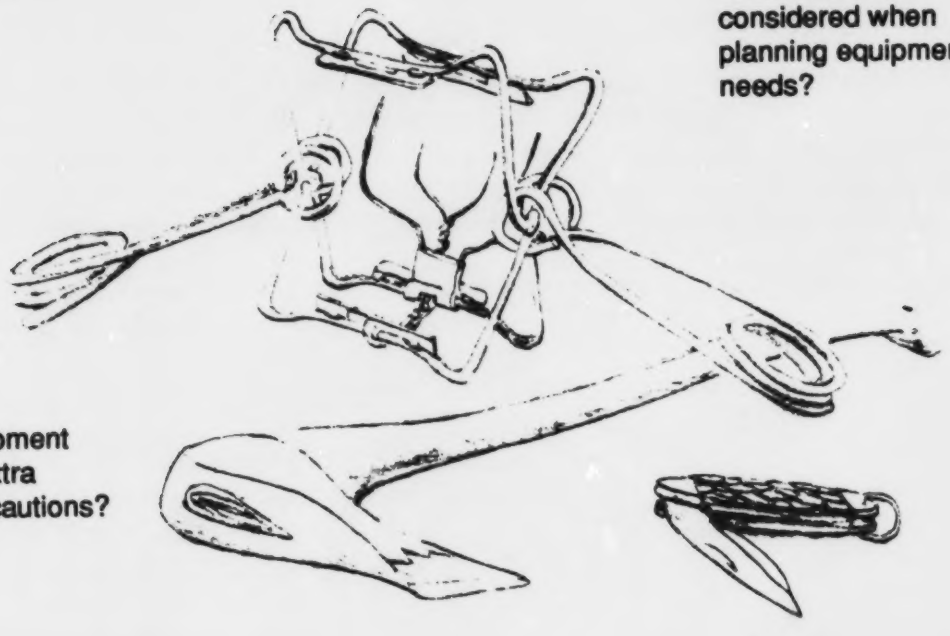
1. What is wild furbearer management?
2. What is the name of the pamphlet which summarizes Alberta's trapping laws and regulations?
3. Name four ways the Alberta government assists in the management of wild furbearers.
4. List four ways individuals can help to manage wild furbearers.
5. How can an estimate of the number of furbearers in an area be obtained?
6. Who should be notified if disease is suspected in the furbearers on a management area?
7. What action should be taken if a health problem is suspected in furbearers of your trapping area?
8. How can you tell if a beaver lodge is being lived in?
9. Why should animals be heavily harvested near privately owned land?
10. Why is it a good idea to feed wild furbearers in the late winter?

# EQUIPMENT

What are some important groups of equipment?

What is the equipment used for?

What should be considered when planning equipment needs?



What equipment requires extra safety precautions?

What quality controls are necessary?

What equipment items are recommended?

Why is it important to keep equipment in good condition?

# OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this section you should be able to:

1. Identify three important groups of equipment required in the operation of a wild fur management area.

2. Identify the recommended equipment items shown and/or their parts and their correct use.

3. Identify the quality control items needed to meet the standard for fur handling and capture equipment.

4. Identify equipment items which require extra safety precautions.

5. Recognize at least three important considerations in assessing equipment needs.

6. Name at least three reasons why it is important to maintain equipment in good condition.

# INTRODUCTION

A wide variety of equipment is required to successfully run a wild fur management area operation. Some of this equipment is quite specialized.

Three important groups of equipment needed are:
- capture equipment
- fur handling equipment
- accessory equipment

Capture equipment consists of killing traps, restraining traps, submarine traps, common snares and power snares.

Fur handling equipment includes forming boards, drying boards, fleshing beams and tools, skinning gambrels, tail splitting guides and other related items.

Accessory equipment includes safety grippers for use on killing traps, trap setting tools, flagging tape, ice chisel, flashlight and a wide variety of other useful items.

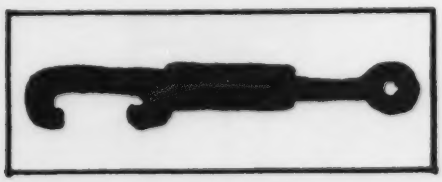
Sketches of equipment items along with short explanations of their uses is covered in this section. (These sketches are **not** drawn to scale.)

The following should be considered when planning equipment needs:
- the size of the operation
- the type of country, habitat and weather conditions
- the number and variety of furbearers to be harvested
- other uses for the equipment
- the quality and quantity of the equipment

Equipment should be well maintained to help ensure a high humane standard and to avoid costly repairs and delays. Good maintenance practices are also good safety practices.

Traps, snares, knives, ice chisels, axes, saws, guns and ammunition are potentially dangerous. Special care and attention should be taken when using these items.

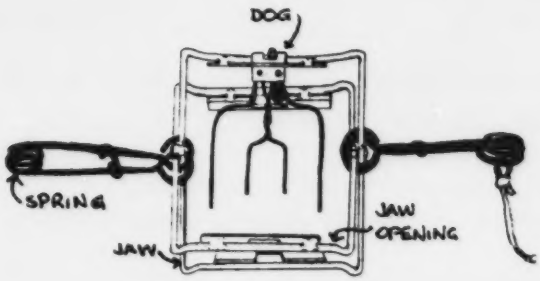
In this chapter the **caution symbol** (safety gripper) appears next to the most dangerous items to serve as a reminder when using such equipment.

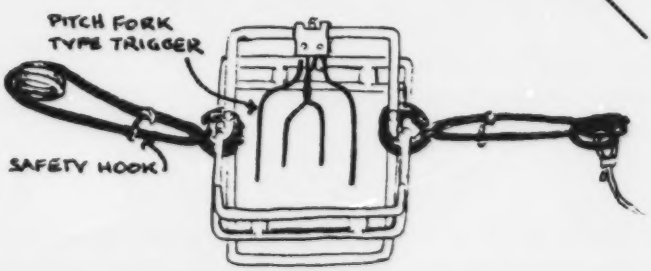


# CAPTURE EQUIPMENT

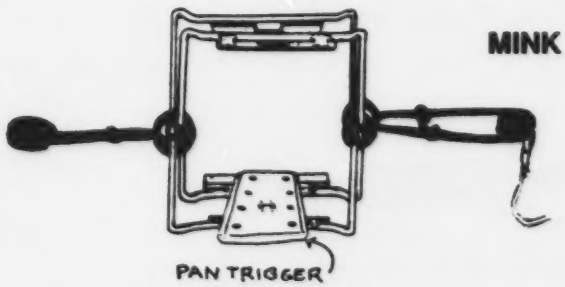
**Quality Control Standard**
Capture device must be complete as shown.
Use the recommended size and model of approved devices.
Adjust, maintain and operate the devices properly.

## KILLING TRAPS - a) CONIBEAR TYPE



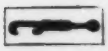
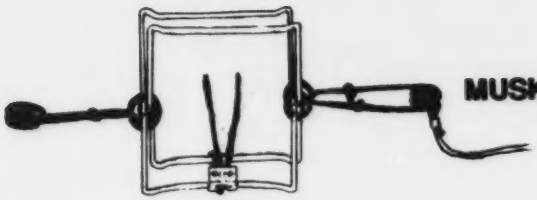
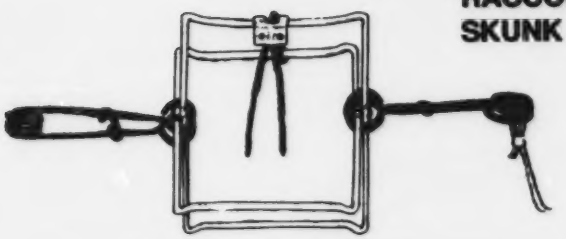
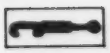
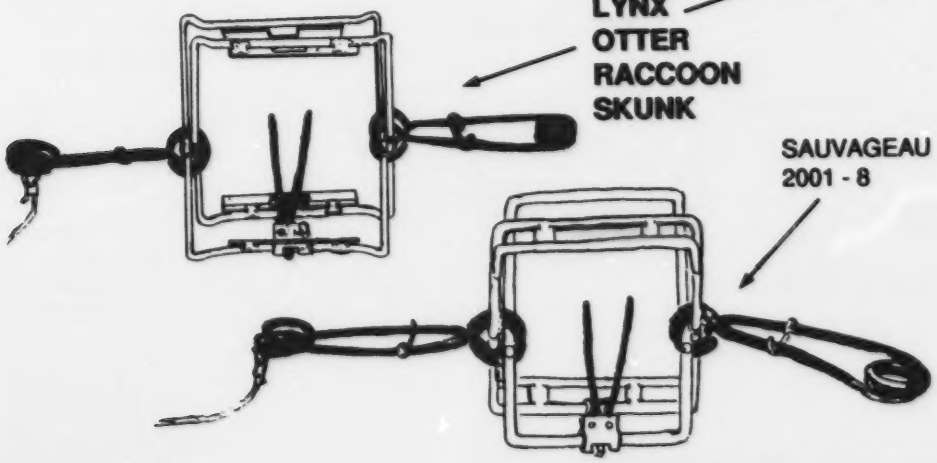




| | *MODEL* | *JAW OPENING SIZE* |
|---|---|---|
| **MARTEN** | C-120 MAGNUM | 11 x 11 cm (4 1/2 x 4 1/2 in.) |
| | 2001-5 SAUVAGEAU | |



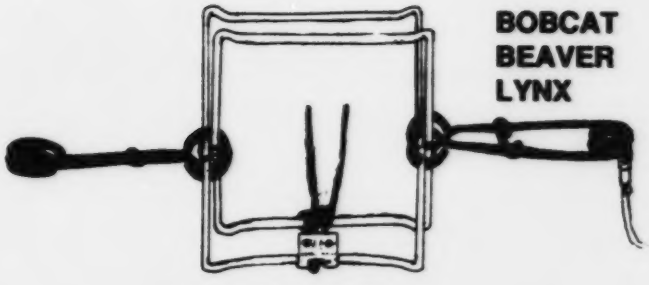

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **MINK** | C-120 MAGNUM | 11 x 11 cm (4 1/2 x 4 1/2 in.) |

# KILLING TRAPS - a) CONIBEAR TYPE (continued)

| | *MODEL* | *JAW OPENING SIZE* |
|---|---|---|
|   | **MUSKRAT** — CONIBEAR 120 | 11 x 11 cm (4 1/2 x 4 1/2 in.) |
| | CONIBEAR 126 | |
|  | **BADGER, OTTER, RACCOON, SKUNK** — CONIBEAR 220 | 17 x 17 cm (7 x 7 in.) |
|   | **BADGER, BOBCAT, BEAVER, LYNX, OTTER, RACCOON, SKUNK** — CONIBEAR 280 | 20 x 20 cm (8 x 8 in.) |
| | SAUVAGEAU 2001 - 8 | 20 x 20 cm (8 x 8 in.) |

# KILLING TRAPS - a) CONIBEAR TYPE (continued)

| | *MODEL* | *JAW OPENING SIZE* |
|---|---|---|
| **BOBCAT**<br>**BEAVER**<br>**LYNX** | CONIBEAR 330 | 25 x 25 cm<br>(10 x 10 in.) |



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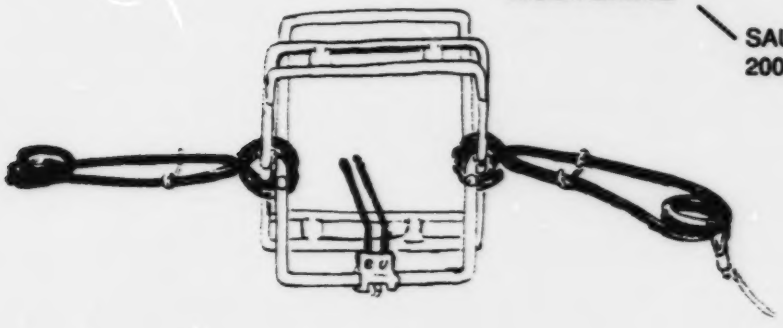
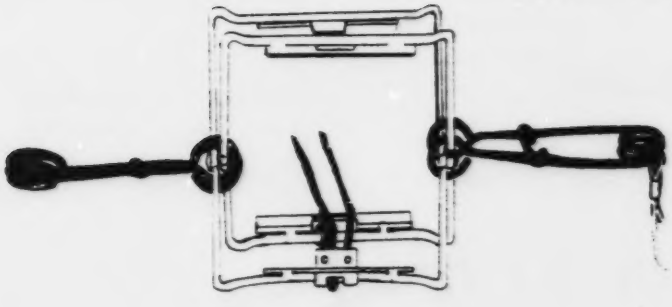
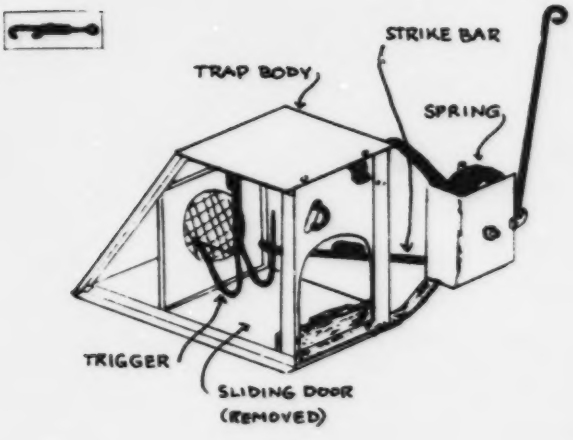
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **WOLVERINE** | CONIBEAR 280 | 20 x 20 cm<br>(8 x 8 in.) |
| | SAUVAGEAU<br>2001 - 8 | |



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **WOLVERINE** | CONIBEAR 330 | 25 x 25 cm<br>(10 x 10 in.) |



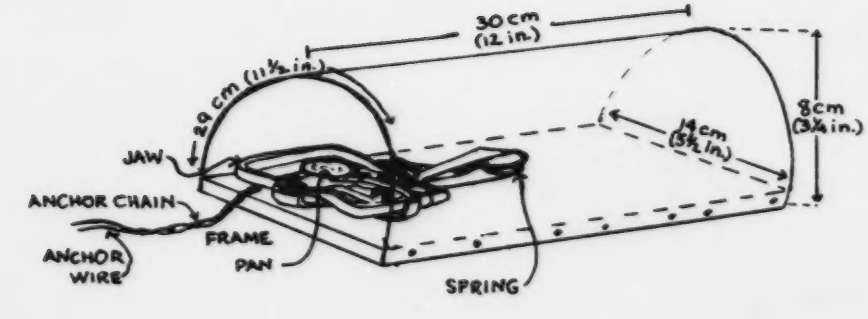
## KILLING TRAPS - b) KANIA TYPE



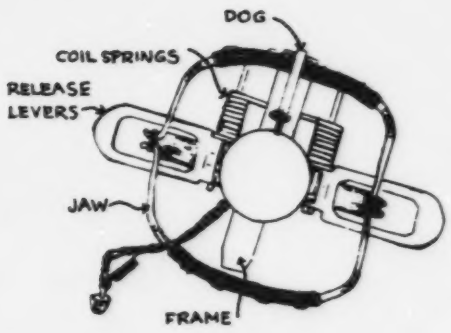

| | MODEL | TRAP OPENING |
|---|---|---|
| **MARTEN** | KANIA | 8 x 10 cm (3 x 4 in.) |

## KILLING TRAPS - c) CAN TYPE

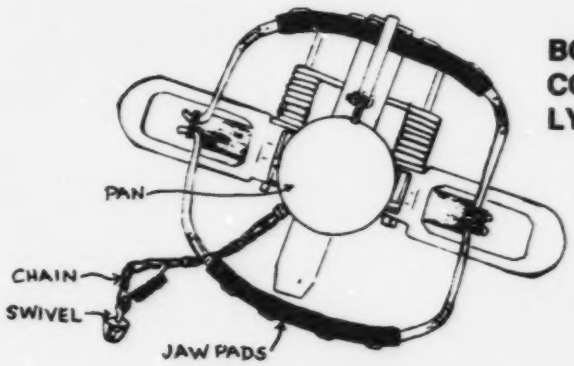
| | MODEL | JAW SPREAD |
|---|---|---|
| **WEASEL** | #1 1/2 in. LONGSPRING | 12 cm (4 3/4 in.) |



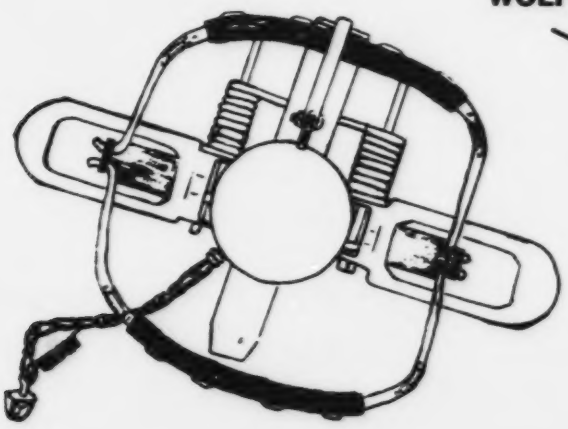
# RESTRAINING TRAPS (FOOTHOLD)




| | MODEL | JAW SPREAD |
|---|---|---|
| **FOX** | #1 1/2 SOFTCATCH | 7 cm (4 7/8 in.) |



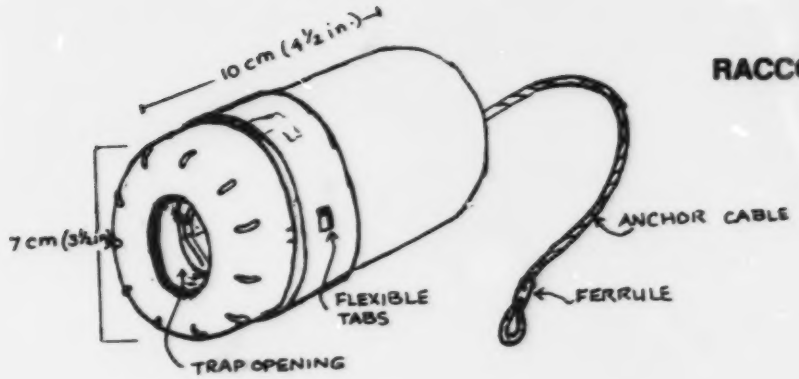

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **BOBCAT COYOTE LYNX** | #3 SOFTCATCH | 13 cm (5 3/8 in.) |



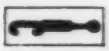
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **WOLF** | BRAUN<br>HELFRICH ELIMINATOR 750 W | 19 cm (7 1/2 in.) |

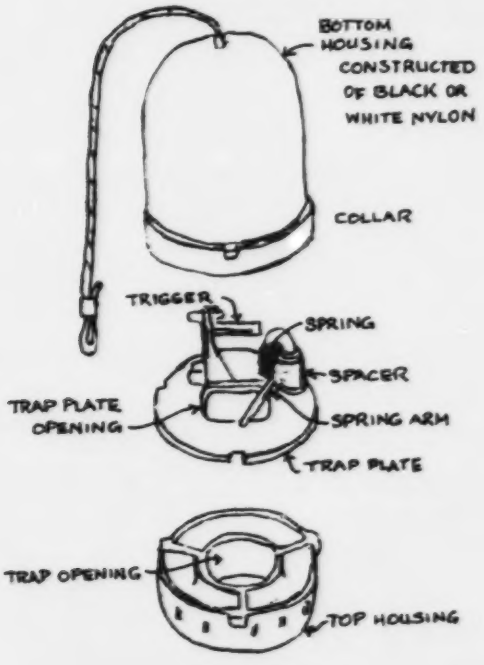
# RESTRAINING TRAPS (FOOTHOLD) - continued

***MODEL***



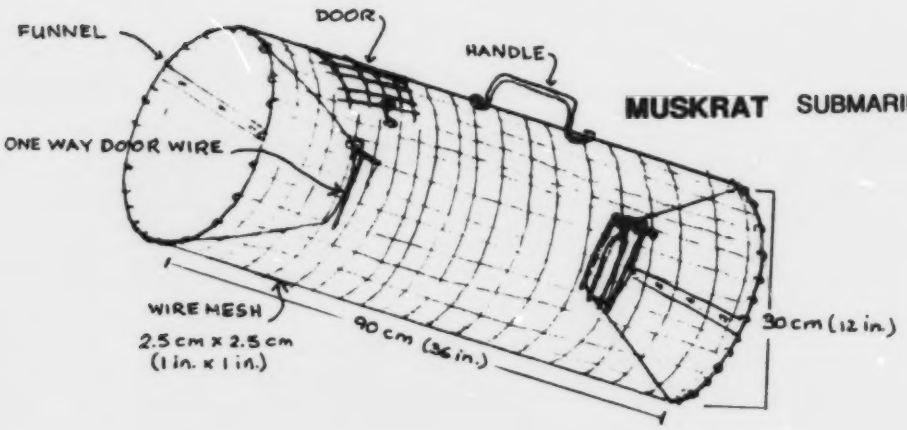

**RACCOON** EGG TRAP





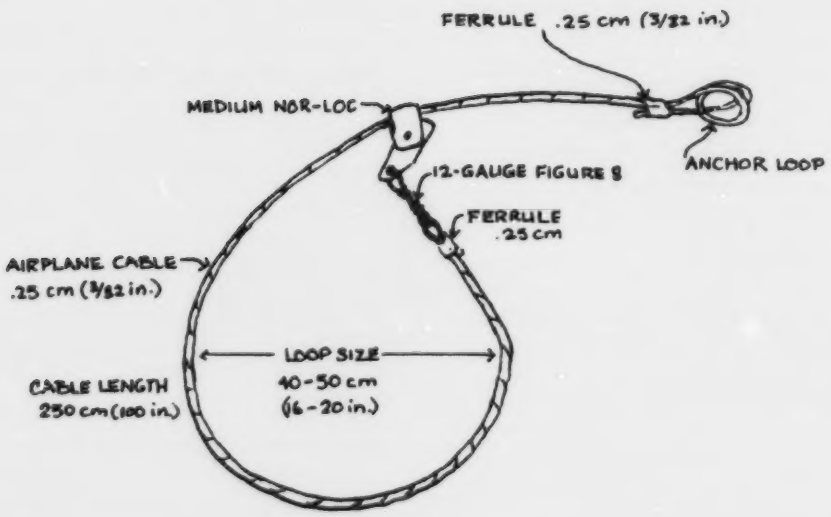
# SUBMARINE TRAP

| MODEL | | TRAP FUNNEL OPENING |
|---|---|---|
| MUSKRAT | SUBMARINE | 10 cm (4 1/2 in.) |

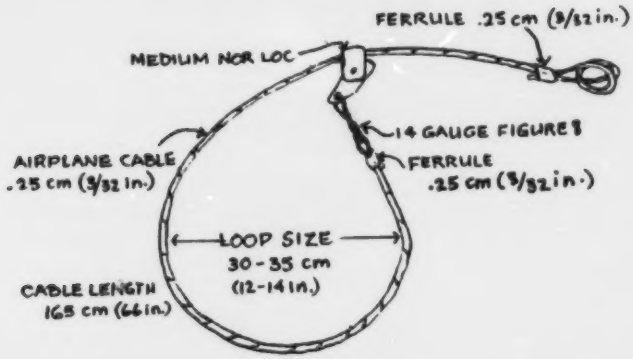



# KILLING SNARES - a) LOCKING NECK TYPE

**WOLF**

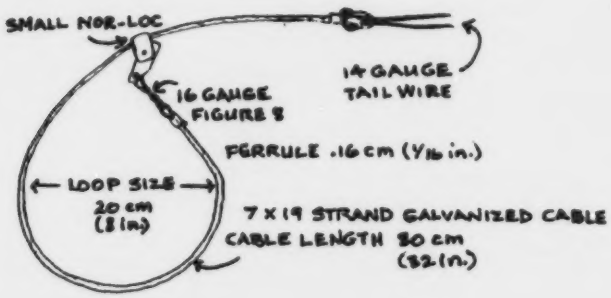


# KILLING SNARES - a) LOCKING NECK TYPE (continued)



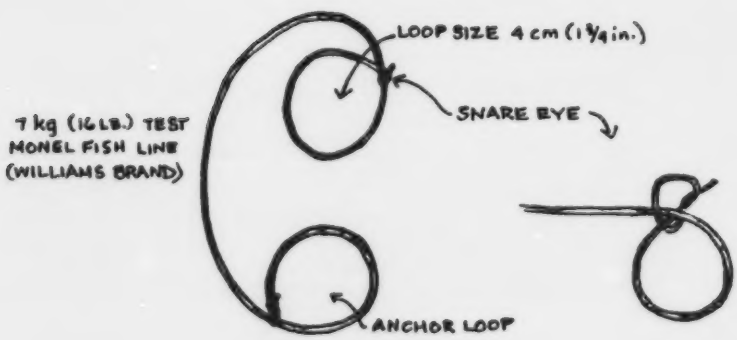

**COYOTE**

---



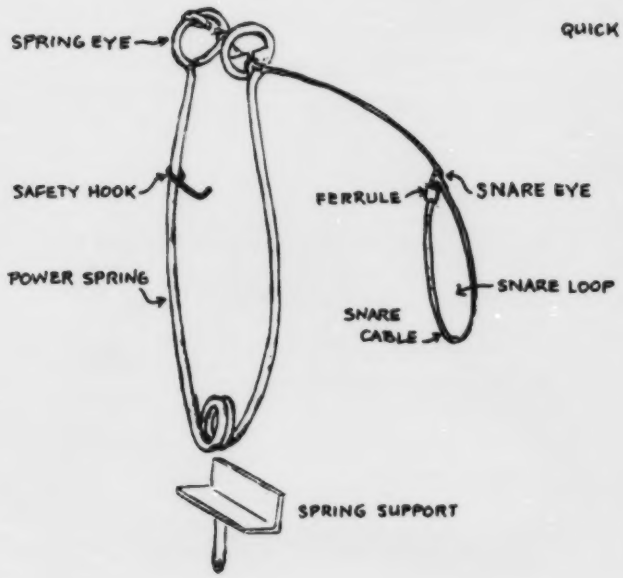

**LYNX**

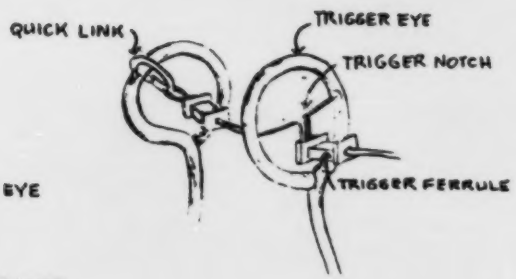
# KILLING SNARES - b) COMMON NECK TYPE




**RED SQUIRREL**

# KILLING SNARES - c) POWER-KILLING SNARES

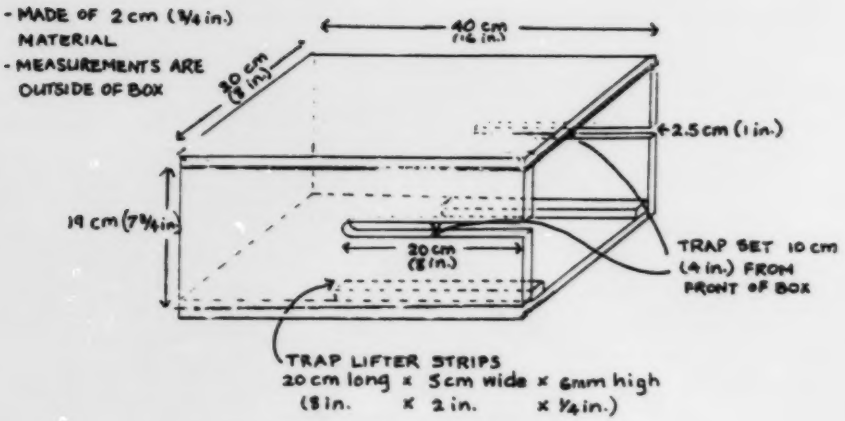


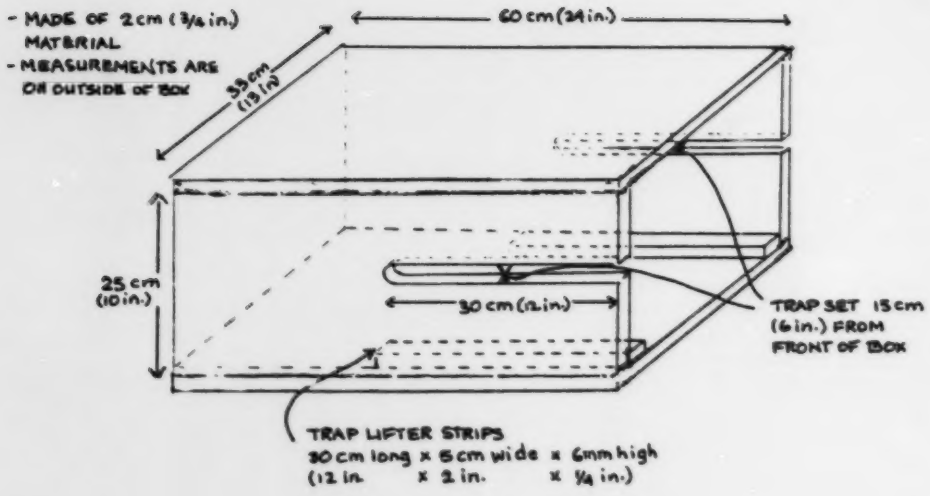

| *USE* | *BOTTOM OF SNARE LOOP TO GROUND* | *DIAMETER OF LOOP* | *CABLE SIZE* | *MODEL & CABLE LENGTH* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **LYNX** | 30 cm (12 in.) | 20 cm (8 in.) | 1.2 mm (3/64 in.) | Use the correct model and cable length for each species as recommend-ed by the manufacturer. |
| **BOBCAT** | 25 cm (10 in.) | 20 cm (8 in.) | 1.2 mm (3/64 in.) | |
| **FOX** | 20 cm (8 in.) | 20 cm (8 in.) | 1.2 mm (3/64 in.) | |
| **COYOTE** | 30 cm (12 in.) | 30 cm (12 in.) | 2.4 mm (3/32 in.) | |
| **WOLF** | 40 cm (16 in.) | 35 cm (14 in.) | 2.4 mm (3/32 in.) | |

# TRAP BOX (for Conibear type kill traps)

**MINK**
**MARTEN**


- MADE OF 2 cm (¾ in.) MATERIAL
- MEASUREMENTS ARE OUTSIDE OF BOX
40 cm (16 in.)
30 cm (8 in.)
2.5 cm (1 in.)
19 cm (7¾ in.)
20 cm (8 in.)
TRAP SET 10 cm (4 in.) FROM FRONT OF BOX
TRAP LIFTER STRIPS
20 cm long x 5 cm wide x 6mm high
(8 in. x 2 in. x ¼ in.)

**FISHER**
**WOLVERINE**
**RACCOON**


- MADE OF 2 cm (¾ in.) MATERIAL
- MEASUREMENTS ARE ON OUTSIDE OF BOX
60 cm (24 in.)
33 cm (13 in.)
25 cm (10 in.)
30 cm (12 in.)
TRAP SET 15 cm (6 in.) FROM FRONT OF BOX
TRAP LIFTER STRIPS
30 cm long x 5 cm wide x 6mm high
(12 in. x 2 in. x ¼ in.)

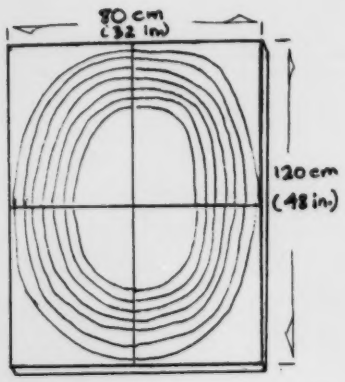
# FUR HANDLING EQUIPMENT

## FORMING AND DRYING BOARDS

**Quality control standard**
Use the recommended style and shape of forming and drying board.
The board must be smooth and of the correct size.

### a) OPEN STYLE PELTS

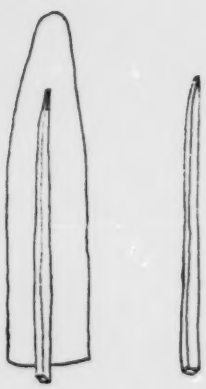
**BADGER**
**BEAVER**




### b) CASED STYLE PELTS

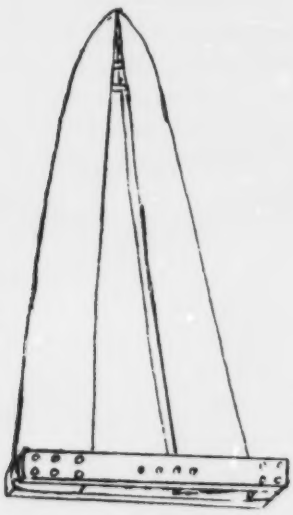
*ONE PIECE BOARD*

**MARTEN**
**MINK**
**MUSKRAT**
**SQUIRREL**
**WEASEL**



## CASED STYLE PELTS (continued)

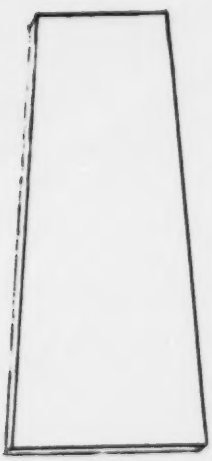
### *TWO PIECE BOARD*



**BOBCAT**
**COYOTE**
**FISHER**
**FOX**
**LYNX**
**OTTER**
**RACCOON**
**SKUNK**
**WOLF**
**WOLVERINE**

### *LEG AND TAIL BOARDS*

**BOBCAT**
**COYOTE**
**FISHER**
**FOX**
**LYNX**
**MARTEN**
**WOLF**
**WOLVERINE**

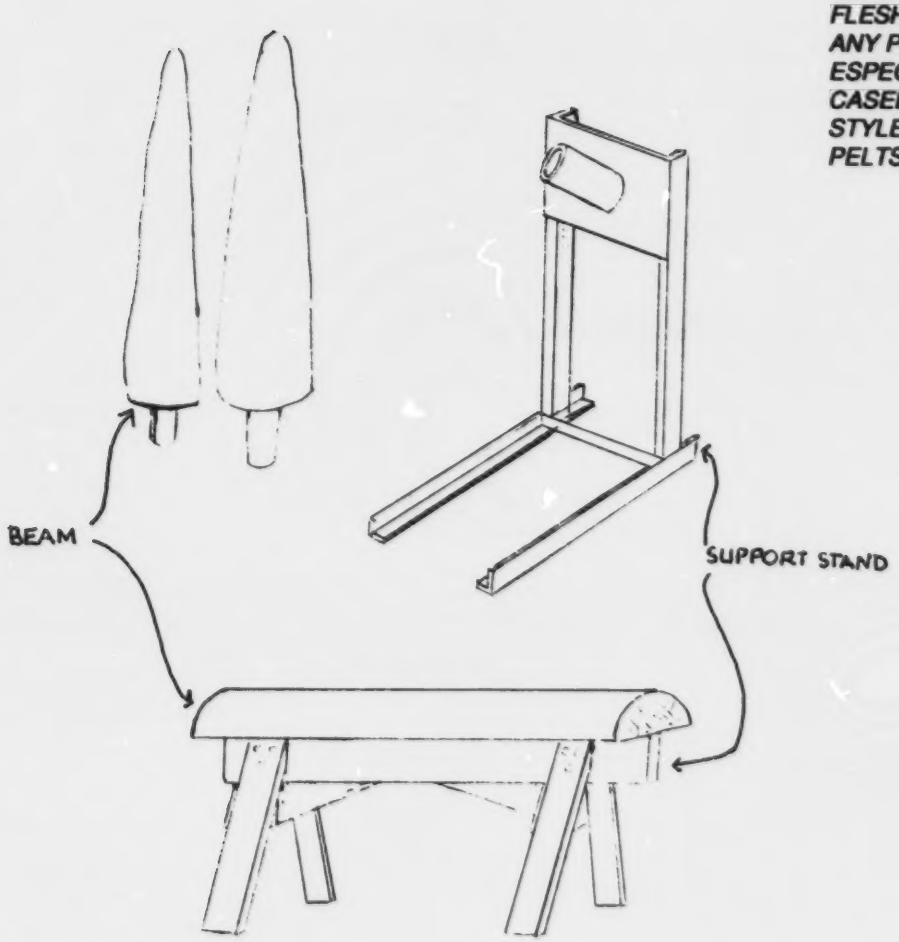


**COYOTE**
**FISHER**
**FOX**
**OTTER**
**RACCOON**
**SKUNK**
**WOLF**

# FLESHING BEAMS

**Quality Control Standard**
Beams must be smooth, tapered and properly shaped.

*USED FOR FLESHING ANY PELT, ESPECIALLY CASED STYLE PELTS.*

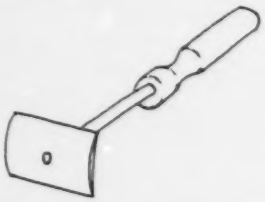


# PELT FLESHING TOOLS

**Quality control standard**
Fleshers must have the correct degree of sharpness.

***FLESHERS ARE USED TO REMOVE UNWANTED FAT OR FLESH FROM THE LEATHER SIDE OF A PELT.***

HORSE RIB BONE
*(used on a beam)*



BLAKE AND LAMB TYPE FLESHER
*(used on a flat board)*

ZEPF TYPE METAL BLADED STRAIGHT FLESHER
*(used on a beam)*

NYLON TYPE STRAIGHT FLESHER
*(used on a beam)*

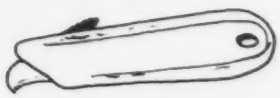
ZEPF TYPE
CURVED FLESHER
*(used on a flat board)*

LEG BONE FLESHER
*(used on flat board, also for skinning beaver)*

ROUGH WOVEN CLOTH
*(used on small pelts, e.g. squirrel, weasel)*

# KNIVES

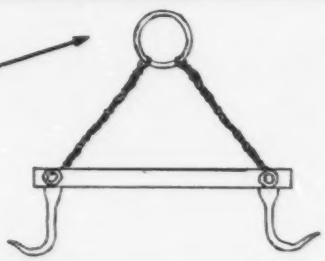
**Quality control standard**
Knives must be kept sharp.

| ***EQUIPMENT*** | | ***USE*** |
|---|---|---|
| ROUGH CUTTING KNIFE | | *FOR ROUGH CUTTING WORK SUCH AS AROUND BONE OR FOR CUTTING OFF FEET* |
| JACK KNIFE | | *GENERAL SKINNING KNIFE USED MOSTLY FOR SMALL FURBEARERS* |
| BEAVER SKINNING KNIFE | | *STYLE PREFERRED FOR SKINNING BEAVER* |
| FURBEARER SKINNING KNIFE | | *GENERAL SKINNING KNIFE USED MOSTLY FOR LARGER FURBEARERS* |
| UTILITY KNIFE |  | *FOR SPLITTING OPEN THE PELT ON THE BELLY OR LEGS* |

**SKINNING GAMBREL**

HANGING RING

LEG HOOKS

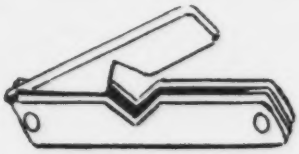


*FOR SUSPENDING AN ANIMAL WHILE SKINNING*

**TAIL SPLITTING GUIDE**

*FOR GUIDING THE KNIFE TO INSURE A STRAIGHT CUT WHEN SPLITTING THE TAIL*

**TAIL STRIPPING TOOL**



*FOR PULLING THE TAIL LEATHER FROM THE TAIL BONE*

**FUR HANDLING BAGS**

CARCASS BAG

*FOR TRANSPORTING ANIMALS FROM THE CAPTURE SIGHT TO HOME*

FUR SHIPPING BAG (WOVEN MATERIAL)

*FOR TRANSPORTING THE FINISHED PELTS*

**FUR COMB AND BRUSH**

*TO CLEAN AND FLUFF UP THE FUR*

**PUSH PINS AND NAILS**

ALUMINUM PUSH PIN

*FOR PINNING PELTS TO THE FORMING AND DRYING BOARD*

STRAIGHT FLUTED FLOORING NAIL

*FOR NAILING BEAVER AND BADGER PELTS TO BOARD*

**NEEDLES AND THREAD**

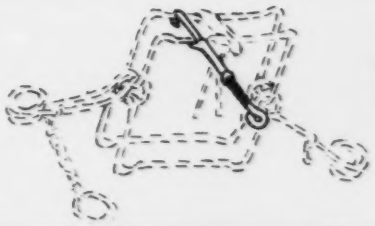
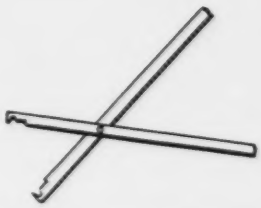
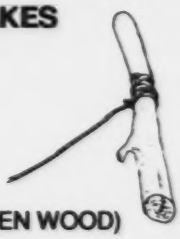
CUTTING EDGE SUTURE NEEDLE

THREE-SIDED GLOVER'S NEEDLE

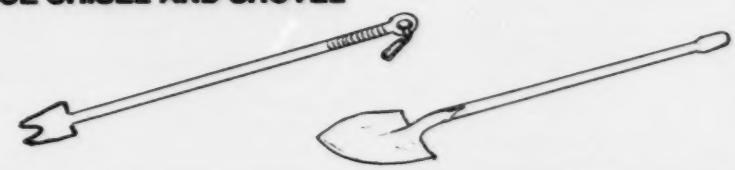
WAXED LINEN OR POLYESTER THREAD

*TO SEW PELTS WHEREVER NEEDED*

# ACCESSORY EQUIPMENT

| EQUIPMENT | USE |
|---|---|
| **TRAP SAFETY GRIPPER**  | *TO PREVENT CONIBEAR TYPE TRAPS FROM CLOSING WHILE BEING SET* |
| **TRAPSETTING TOOL**  | *TO COMPRESS STRONG TRAP SPRINGS* |
| **TRAP DRAGS AND STAKES**  TRAP DRAG (GREEN WOOD) | *TO PROVIDE MEANS OF HOLDING THE ANIMAL WHEN IN A TRAP* |
| **SPARE PARTS** SPARK PLUGS AXE HANDLE TRAP AND SNARE PARTS | *FOR GENERAL REPAIRS* |
| **TOOL KIT** SPARK PLUG WRENCH VICE GRIPS TOOL BAG WITH OTHER ASSORTED TOOLS (STRONG FABRIC CASE) | *FOR REPAIRS, CUTTING WIRE AND OTHER NEEDS* |

**ICE CHISEL AND SHOVEL**



*FOR CUTTING HOLES IN THE ICE*

*FOR SHOVELING SNOW OR DIGGING HOLES*

**SHARPENING TOOLS**

*TO KEP CUTTING TOOLS SHARP*

**WAX, DYE AND CONTAINERS**

*FOR TREATING TRAPS AND SNARES*

**LURES**

*TO ATTRACT FURBEARERS TO THE SET*

SCENTS AND URINE

BAITS (BEAVER MEAT)

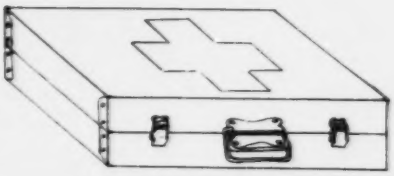
**FLAGGING TAPE**

*TO MARK SETS, TRAILS AND EQUIPMENT*

**NEEDLES AND THREAD**

*FOR GENERAL REPAIRS*

**FIRST AID AND SURVIVAL KIT**



*FOR EMERGENCY USE*

**FLASHLIGHT**

*USED WHEN REPAIRING THINGS, CHECKING SETS, ETC. IN THE DARK*

**BOOKS AND MAPS**

*FOR KEEPING RECORDS AND AS REFERENCE INFORMATION*

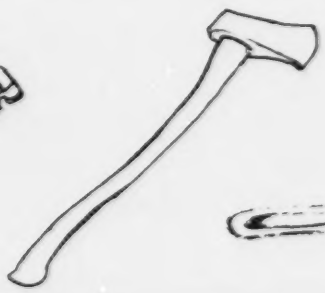
**GUN AND AMMUNITION**

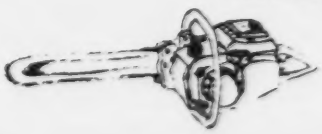
.22 CALIBRE RIFLE

.22 CALIBRE SHELLS

*TO KILL LIVE CAUGHT FURBEARERS (NOTE: CHECK REGULATIONS REGARDING CARRYING GUNS IN VEHICLES)*

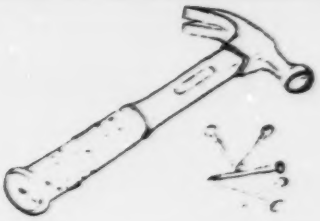
**AXES AND SAWS**





*CUTTING FIREWOOD, CHOPPING ICE, CLEARING TRAILS, BUILDING CABINS*

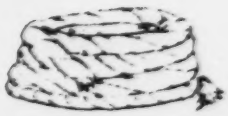
**HAMMER AND NAILS**

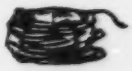


*BUILDING CABINS, SETS AND GENERAL REPAIRS*

*NAILING FUR TO FORMING BOARD*

**ROPE AND WIRE**

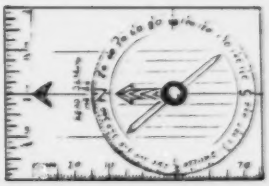




*FOR FASTENING TRAPS, HOLDING LOADS AND GENERAL REPAIRS*

**COMPASS AND MATCHES**

MATCHES IN WATERPROOF CONTAINER



*FOR CHECKING DIRECTION*

*FOR LIGHTING FIRES*

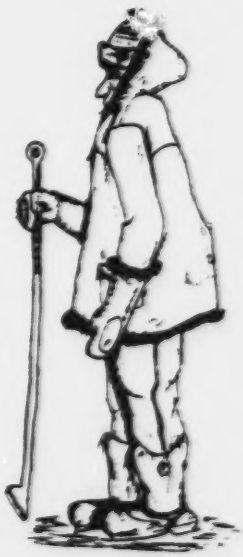
*FOR COOKING AND WARMTH*

**SPECIAL CLOTHING**

*TO KEEP WARM AND DRY*

RUBBER GLOVES

WARM HEADWEAR



WARM PARKA, PANTS AND UNDERCLOTHES

WARM MITTS

WARM FOOTWEAR

(WOOL AND FUR ARE EXCELLENT NATURAL MATERIALS FOR WARMTH AND COMFORT IN CLOTHING)

# REVIEW

1. Identify a marten forming board.
2. Name two types of capture equipment.
3. Name five potentially dangerous pieces of equipment.
4. What are the names of two types of forming boards?
5. List four accessory equipment items.
6. What is the function of a safety gripper?
7. How does a restraining trap differ from a killing trap?
8. What size is the jaw opening for a marten trap?
9. What trap model should be used for a mink?
10. Give two reasons for maintaining equipment in good order.

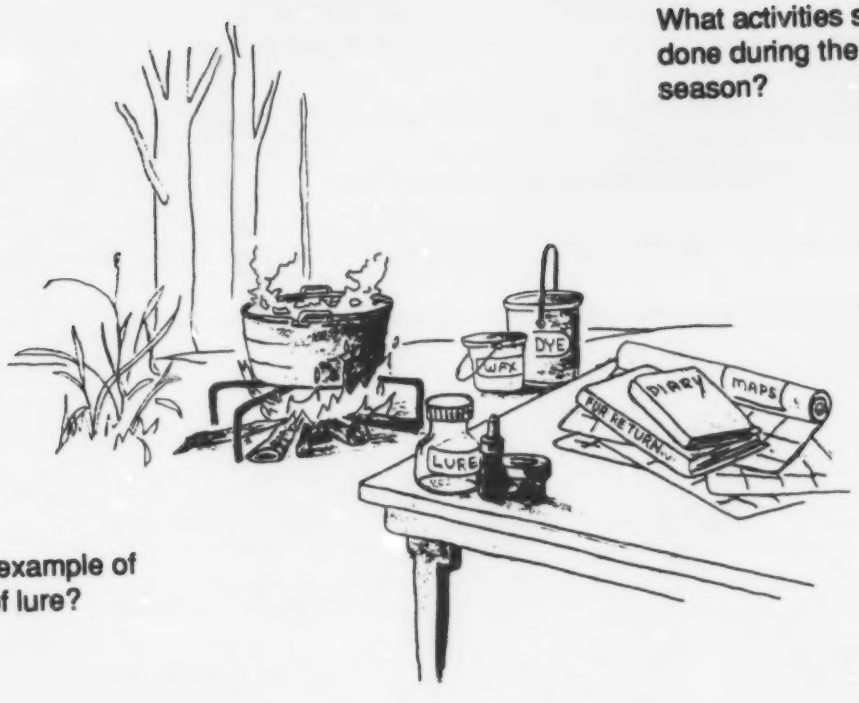
# WILD FUR AREA OPERATIONS PLAN

Why is a plan needed?

What preparations should be done before harvest season begins?

What are lures?

What activities should be done during the harvest season?




What is an example of each type of lure?

What should be done after harvest season?

What are the benefits of treating traps and snares?

# OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this section you should be able to:

1. Recognize the need for and benefits of a wild fur area operations plan.
2. Name at least four activities in the plan which should be done before the harvest season.
3. Identify the four main activities in the plan which should be done during the harvest season.
4. Identify two or more important activities in the plan which should be done after the harvest season.
5. Name at least four benefits of a map and/or record system.
6. Define a lure and name at least four main types.
7. Give at least one example of each type of lure.
8. Identify at least four set preprations that should be done before harvest season opens.
9. Name at least three benefits of treating traps and/or snares.

# INTRODUCTION

A wild fur area operation needs to be run efficiently in order to succeed as a business. This requires careful planning and organization including working out goals and strategies.

All possible preparations should be completed before the harvest season begins. This is necessary because the time period when furbearers are prime is short, and a fur manager's main activities during the open season should be the planned harvest, handling and marketing of fur.

After the harvest is over, activities such as properly storing equipment, replacing lost or damaged tools and cutting next year's wood supply should be completed.

This section shows the benefits of maps and record systems, set preparations, trap and snare treating and the types and use of lures. A suggested plan outlining seasonal activities is given.

# SEASONAL OPERATIONS PLAN

## BEFORE HARVEST SEASON ACTIVITIES

- Prepare (buy, repair, etc.) all needed equipment
- Assemble all supplies; food, fuel, clothing and other personal items
- Buy and/or prepare lures
- Construct trap boxes
- Do a field check of furbearer numbers
- Plan harvest goals
- Prepare trails
- Prepare sets
- Make trap adjustments and modifications
- Construct snares where required
- Treat snares and traps
- Set up or review record systems
- Set deadlines for completing activities

## DURING HARVEST SEASON ACTIVITIES

- Harvest furbearers
- Handle the furs
- Market the furs
- Continue ongoing maintenance of equipment

## AFTER HARVEST SEASON ACTIVITIES

- Pick up capture equipment
- Store equipment and supplies
- Review records

# MAP AND RECORD SYSTEM

## TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP

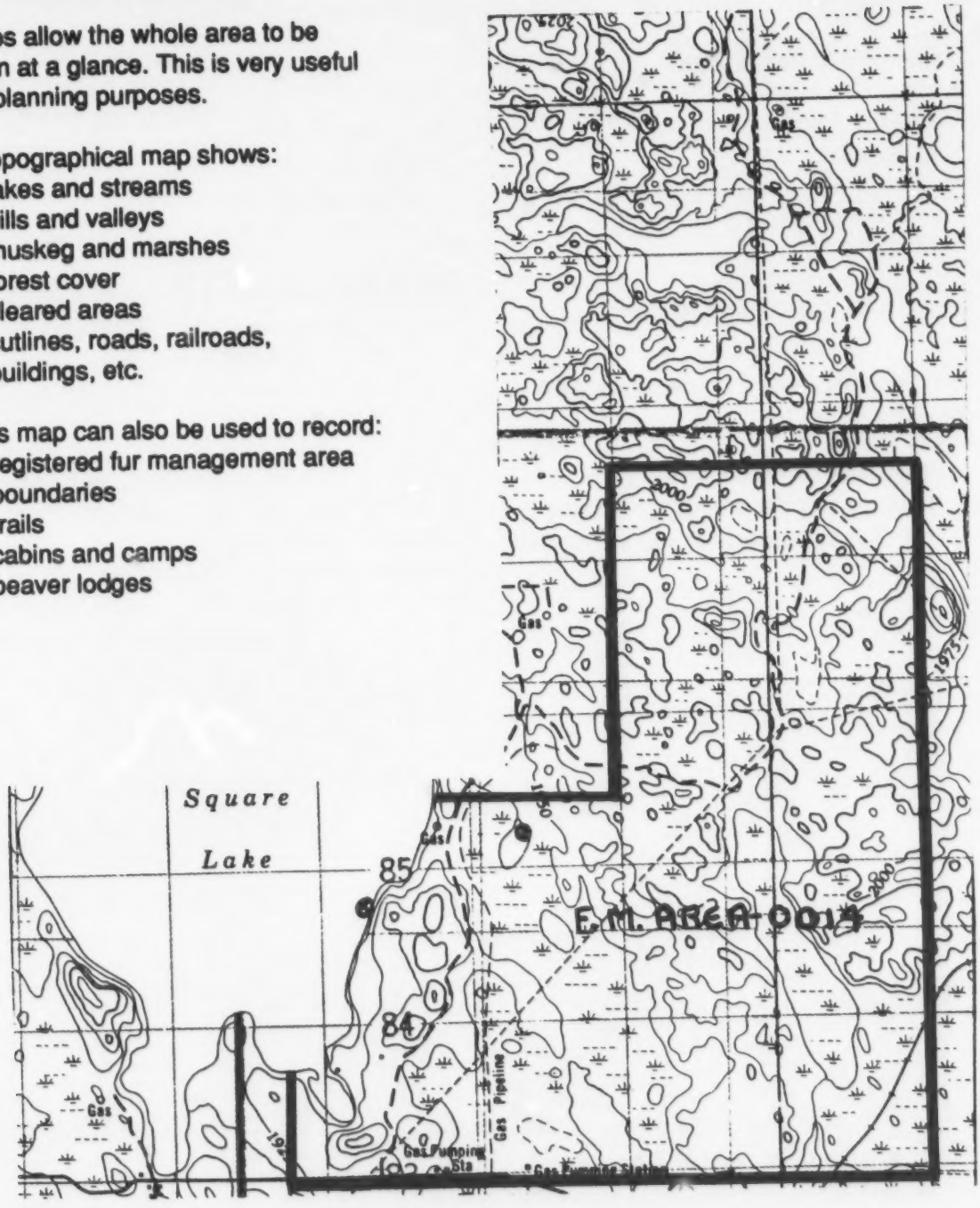
Maps allow the whole area to be seen at a glance. This is very useful for planning purposes.

A topographical map shows:

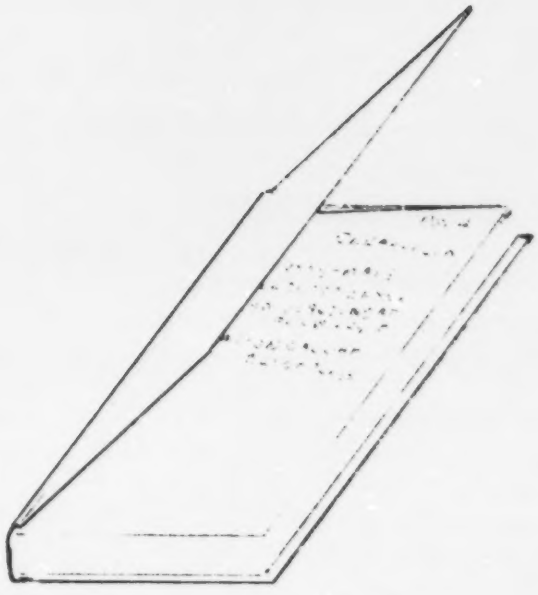
- lakes and streams
- hills and valleys
- muskeg and marshes
- forest cover
- cleared areas
- cutlines, roads, railroads, buildings, etc.

This map can also be used to record:

- registered fur management area boundaries
- trails
- cabins and camps
- beaver lodges



## DAILY DIARY



A daily diary is a place to record information which might otherwise be forgotten.

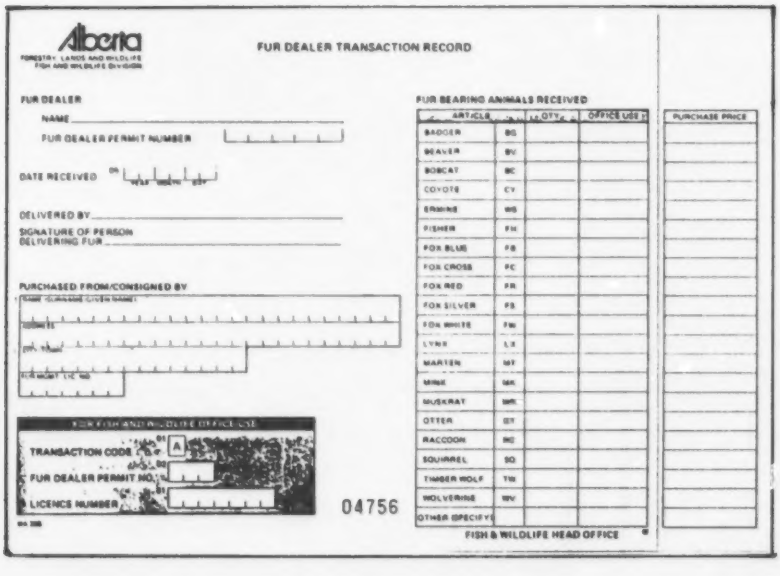
Valuable information can include:

- date
- weather conditions
- sets made
- lures used
- animals caught
- primeness

## FUR SALES RECORD

Fur sales invoices should be kept as a valuable record:

- of income
- of animals taken
- for preparing the annual fur harvest statistics necessary for licence renewal


Alberta

FUR DEALER TRANSACTION RECORD

FUR DEALER

NAME

FUR DEALER PERMIT NUMBER

DATE RECEIVED

DELIVERED BY

SIGNATURE OF PERSON DELIVERING FUR

PURCHASED FROM/CONSIGNED BY

FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE OFFICE USE

TRANSACTION CODE A

FUR DEALER PERMIT NO.

LICENCE NUMBER

04756

FUR BEARING ANIMALS RECEIVED

| ARTICLE | | QTY. | OFFICE USE | PURCHASE PRICE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| BADGER | BG | | | |
| BEAVER | BV | | | |
| BOBCAT | BC | | | |
| COYOTE | CY | | | |
| ERMINE | ME | | | |
| FISHER | FH | | | |
| FOX BLUE | FB | | | |
| FOX CROSS | FC | | | |
| FOX RED | FR | | | |
| FOX SILVER | FS | | | |
| FOX WHITE | FW | | | |
| LYNX | LX | | | |
| MARTEN | MT | | | |
| MINK | MK | | | |
| MUSKRAT | MR | | | |
| OTTER | OT | | | |
| RACCOON | RC | | | |
| SQUIRREL | SQ | | | |
| TIMBER WOLF | TW | | | |
| WOLVERINE | WV | | | |
| OTHER (SPECIFY) | | | | |

FISH & WILDLIFE HEAD OFFICE

# LURES

**Lures are materials or devices used to attract a furbearing animal, usually by sight, smell or sound.**

**BAITS (a food substance)**

Examples: Beaver meat (for marten)
Poplar bark (for beaver)
Fresh fish (for otter)
Carrot (for muskrat)

**SCENTS (a smell-producing substance)**

Examples: Beaver castor (for coyote)
Anise oil (for fisher)
Catnip (for lynx)
Fish oil (for mink)

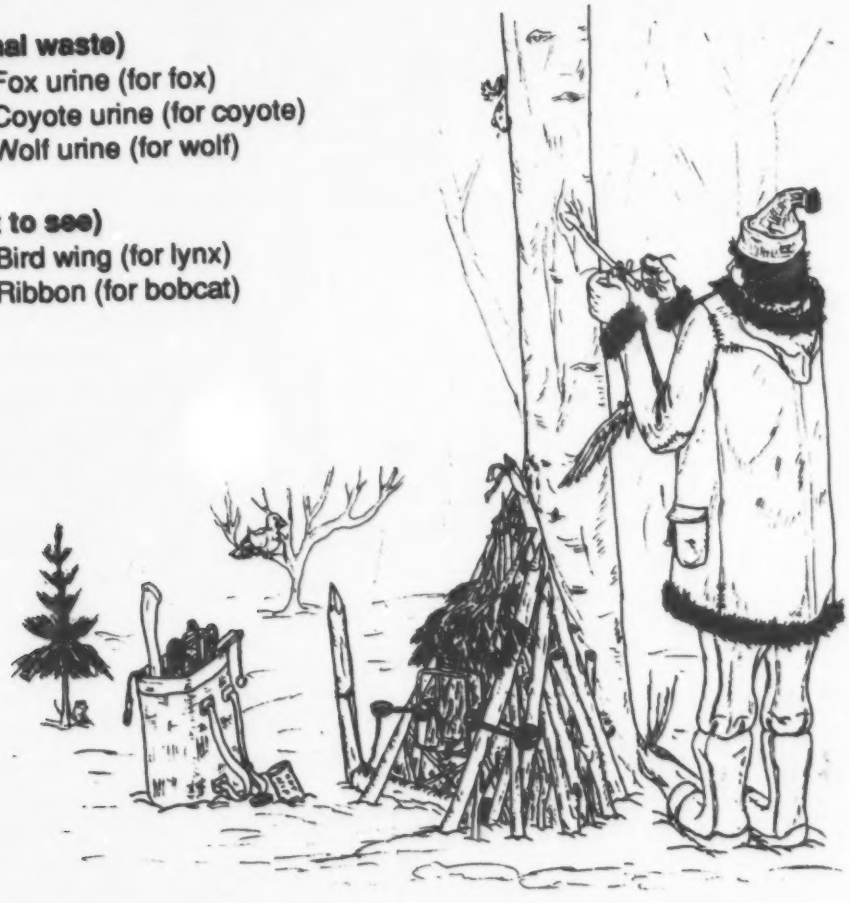
**URINE (liquid animal waste)**

Examples: Fox urine (for fox)
Coyote urine (for coyote)
Wolf urine (for wolf)

**VISUAL (an object to see)**

Examples: Bird wing (for lynx)
Ribbon (for bobcat)

NOTE: Other animals such as mice or squirrels may be attracted to these lures. Their activity and sound may act as an additional lure.



# SET PREPARATIONS

Preparing sets before the harvest season will save valuable time and effort. Some examples of what can be done are:

- marking beaver runs, dens and other set locations
- cutting and positioning marten and squirrel poles
- putting trap boxes in place
- building lynx cubbies
- pre-baiting set locations and bait stations

# TREATING TRAPS AND SNARES

Traps are treated by cleaning, boiling, dyeing and waxing. Snares are also cleaned and boiled but are not waxed and are only lightly dyed.

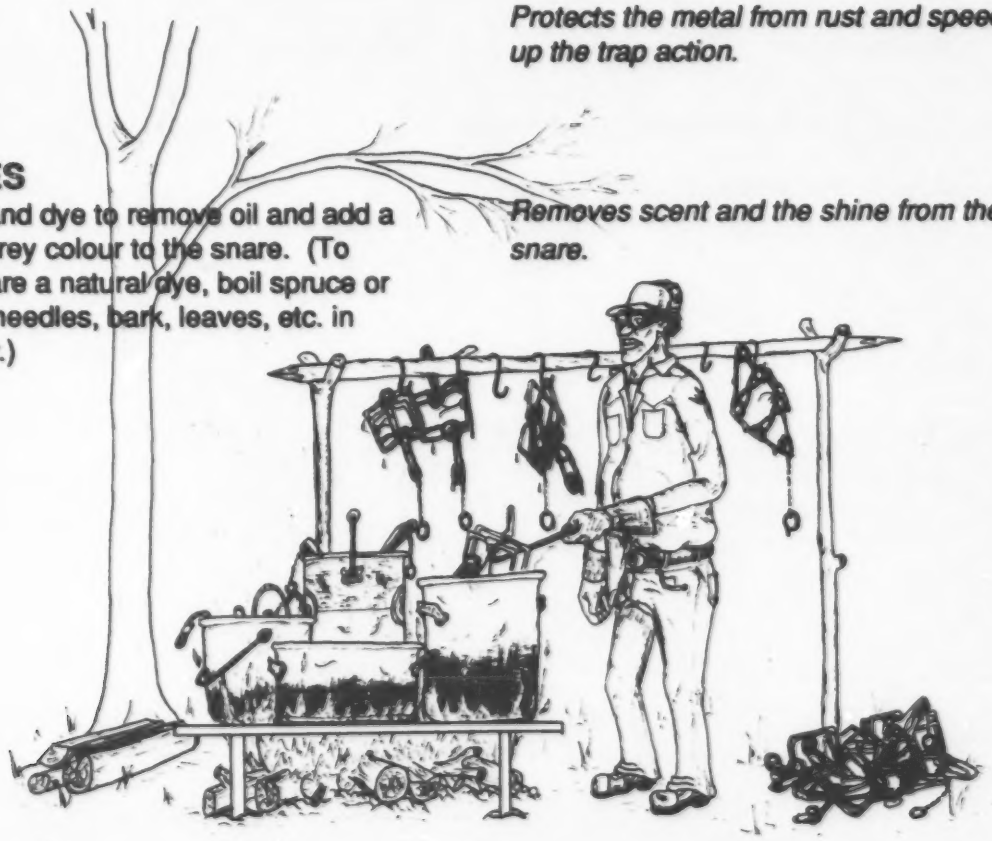
Treating is a recommended practice that should be done before the harvest season begins. The procedures involved and their benefits are as follows.

## TRAPS

1. Clean to remove rust and dirt. — *Exposes the bare metal to improve dyeing.*
2. Boil to remove oils. — *Removes scent.*
3. Dye to add dark colour (use logwood crystals) — *Protects the metal from rusting.*
4. Wax — *Protects the metal from rust and speeds up the trap action.*

## SNARES

1. Boil and dye to remove oil and add a dull grey colour to the snare. (To prepare a natural dye, boil spruce or pine needles, bark, leaves, etc. in water.) — *Removes scent and the shine from the snare.*



# REVIEW

1. During what season should most furs be marketed?
2. What are two set preparations which can be done before the harvest seasons begins?
3. Name two activities which should be done after the harvest season is over.
4. What are three habitat features a topographical map can show?
5. Name two things which can be recorded on a map.
6. Why is keeping a diary a recommended practise?
7. List three types of information which can be recorded in a daily diary.
8. What is a lure?
9. Give two examples of a scent used to attract furbearers.
10. Should snares be waxed?
11. What is the benefit of boiling a trap?

# WILD FUR HARVESTING

What is the meaning of a humane death for a furbearing aninal?

What capture device should I use?

Why should I harvest animals humanely?

What is a code of respect for wild fur harvesting?

How can I tell if an animal has died humanely?

What are the best sets to use?

# OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this section you should be able to:

1. Recognize the definition of a humane death.
2. Recognize the definition of and need for a "Wild Fur Manager's Code of Respect".
3. Identify the three main areas of responsibility that make up the code.
4. Identify at least two actions which reflect and/or support each area of responsibility.
5. Identify at least three important reasons why humane practises are necessary.
6. Identify at least four methods ensuring humaneness in wild fur harvesting.
7. Identify at least five signs of pain and/or stress in a captured furbearer.
8. Identify the recommended strike zone for those furbearers captured with a kill type trap shown in this section.
9. Identify the reason for controlling the approach of a furbearing animal into a kill type trap.
10. Identify at least three examples of how to control the approach of an animal.
11. Identify at least one recommended set and the quality control items needed to meet the humane standard for each of the furbearers.
12. Name at least two reasons for humanely releasing or dispatching live caught animals and two methods of doing this.

# INTRODUCTION

The need for more humane methods for capturing wild furbearers was recognized in the 1930s by some wild fur harvesters such as Frank Conibear of Fort Smith, N.W.T.

His pioneering work on a kill type trap was supported by some animal welfare organizations such as the Canadian Association for Humane Trapping.

Later, other organizations (including some trappers' associations), federal and provincial governments and the Federal-Provincial Committee for Humane Trapping joined in the effort.

More recently, the Fur Institute of Canada was formed and is continuing the research and development work.

Societies in general have an awareness of cruelty to animals and do not and will not accept what they perceive as unnecessary cruelty in the harvesting of wild furbearers.

Unfortunately, the perception of cruelty in trapping has already been created in the minds of many people around the world. This could destroy the wild fur industry unless the proper steps are taken to address the problem.

Wild fur harvesting involves killing furbearing animals. Consequently it is important to understand what is meant by a "humane" death: that is, to quickly render an animal irreversibly unconscious until dead.

This section explains the reasons why humaneness is necessary and provides the wild fur manager with a code of respect and a variety of methods which can be used to help achieve humane harvesting.

The conservation of furbearers is particularly important during harvesting operations. The effects of harvesting strategies on the conservation of wild furbearers is dealt with in the Wild Furbearer Management section of this guide.

# WILD FUR MANAGER'S CODE OF RESPECT

***Personal codes of ethics are "unwritten laws" which govern your behaviour at all times. They are your standard of conduct, based upon your respect for the environment, living things and people. The following is a code of respect for wild fur managers.***

### *RESPECT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT*

- Protect and conserve wildlife and its habitat.
- Dispose of animal carcasses and garbage properly.
- Promptly report the presence of diseased animals to the proper authorities.

### *RESPECT FOR ANIMALS*

- Use only sets which meet the quality standards for humaneness.
- Practise proper releasing or killing methods for live caught animals.
- Handle fur to the highest standard of quality.

### *RESPECT FOR PEOPLE*

- Assist landowners having problems with wild furbearers.
- Encourage and support wild fur management education and public awareness programs.
- Support and cooperate with government wildlife agencies and other conservation organizations.

# REASONS FOR HUMANE HARVESTING

Studies have proven that wild furbearers feel pain and suffer stress. Therefore, every effort should be made to prevent unnecessary suffering.

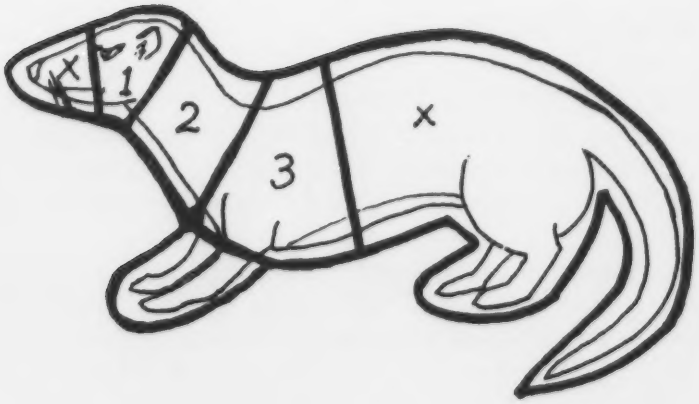
Humane methods are more efficient. They result in fewer escapes, less pelt damage and increased revenue.

Humane methods promote good public relations, which are needed to support the wild fur industry.

# FEATURES OF HUMANE HARVESTING

## STRIKE ZONE

In order for kill type traps to be humane and effective, it is important that the strike bars hit the animal from top and bottom in a vital location with the maximum striking and clamping force. The following diagram illustrates the strike zones, numbered 1 to 3 in the order of effectiveness (# 1 being the most desirable).




**STRIKE ZONES**

## SELECTION OF CAPTURE DEVICES

An essential step in humane harvesting is to select the most humane and efficient capture device available to harvest the target furbearer.

This information can be found in the Equipment section of this guide, on pages 41 to 50

## TRIGGER FORM AND POSITION

Trigger form and position in kill type traps requires careful adjustment to ensure the best strike on the animal.

*NOTE: Baiting of the trigger on kill type traps set on land is not recommended due to the danger of birds being captured.*

**For details, refer to the Equipment section of this guide, on pages 41 to 44 and to the sketches of sets in this section on pages 79 to 94.**

## POSITIONING OF KILL TYPE CAPTURE DEVICES

Kill type capture devices should always be placed in a position which allows the animal to enter the device without changing its normal travel route.

The devices must also be centered on and at right angles to the animals' travel route and be at the proper height to allow the animal's head to enter the device. Correct device positioning will help ensure the humane and effective capture of furbearers.

These principles are illustrated by the kill type sets shown in the following pages of this section.

## CONTROLLING APPROACH

Controlling approach of the furbearer is beneficial for some sets, for example, carefully positioning sticks to block off the sides of a wide trail or run. Boxes or cubbies are enclosures with a doorway which controls the furbearer's approach. Pole sets such as for the marten or squirrel provide the only way for the furbearer to enter the device.

Refer to the sets in this section which illustrate these principles.

This will help to ensure a good strike location.

## SET LOCATION

The location of a set can also affect its humaneness.

For example, a kill type set placed underwater for otter, mink, beaver or muskrat will not catch birds and has the added advantage of drowning the animal quickly. A place to avoid making sets are game trails, as these will have a higher risk of capturing non-target species.

## RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF PAIN AND STRESS

Every captured animal should be carefully checked for signs of pain or stress. If any of the following signs are present then steps should be taken to prevent it from happening again:

- poor strike location for a kill type trap
- poor snare location on the animal
- deep bruising and bleeding under the skin
- swelling of the trapped limb
- skin cut by the trap
- dislocated or broken bones
- bleeding gum, broken teeth or dirt in the mouth
- broken claws
- disturbed trap site

## DISPATCH AND RELEASE OF LIVE-CAUGHT ANIMALS

**Dispatch**

Live caught animals which are to be kept should be killed humanely by shooting in the head with a .22 calibre rifle as shown. (**X**)

**Release**

It is desirable to release live-caught animals which are not seriously injured and are:

- unprime or out of season
- valuable breeding stock
- non-furbearers

They should also be released when the legislated quota for that species has already been taken.

***Wild animals are potentially dangerous. Precautions should be taken to ensure your safety and the welfare of the animal while it is being released.***

A sturdy forked stick can be used to hold large animals down while the trap is being removed.

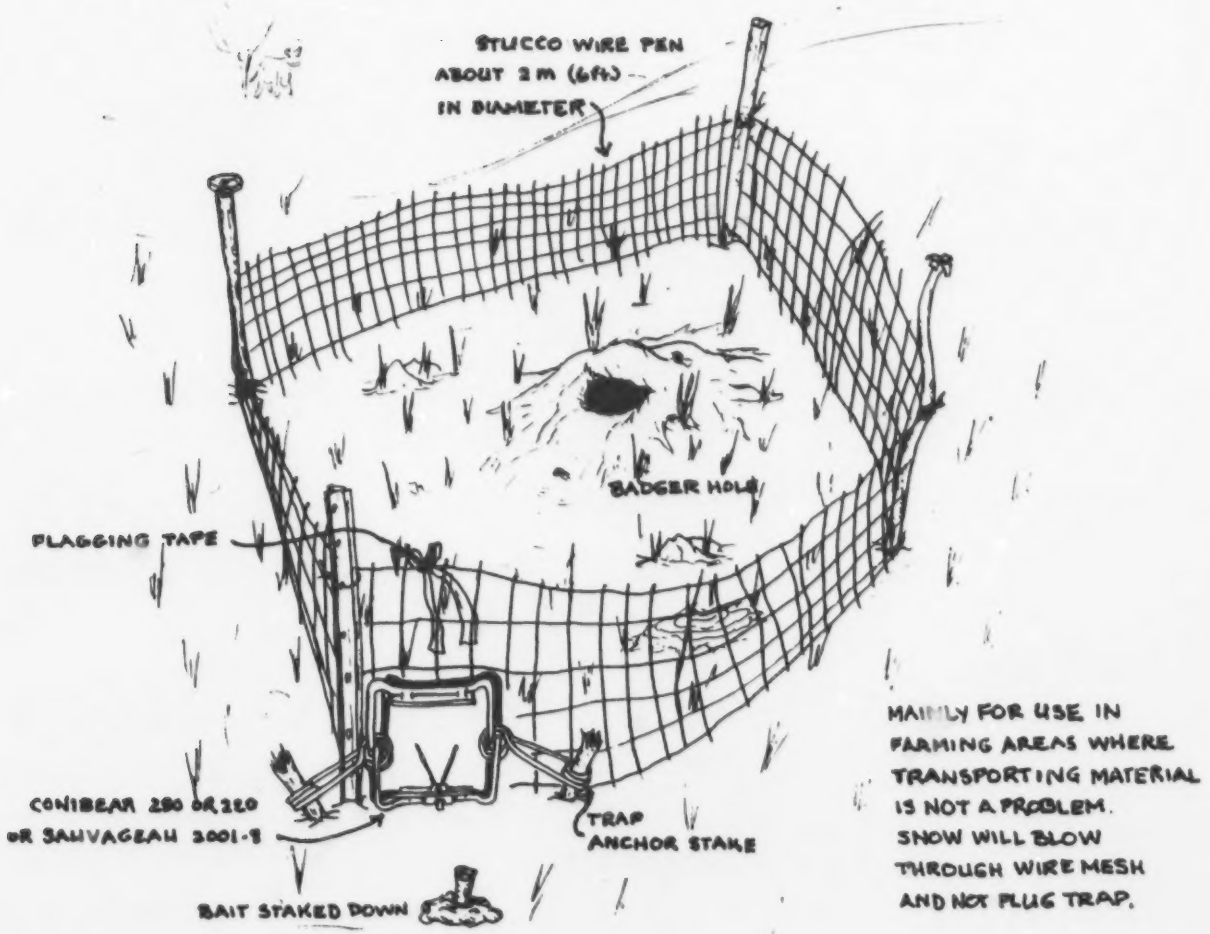
A tarp, blanket or coat can be used to cover and restrain smaller animals during their release.

## RECOMMENDED SETS

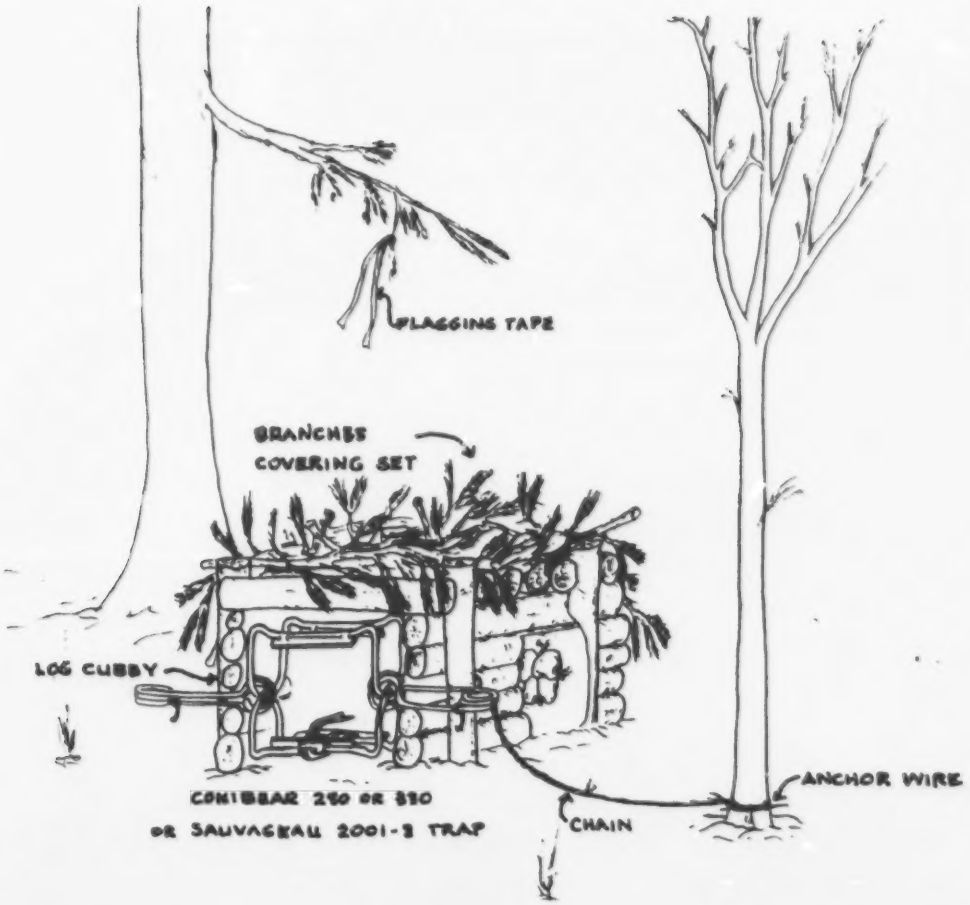
**Quality Control Standard**
Use the recommended set for each furbearer.
Set must be complete as shown.
Measurements and instructions must be followed.

# BADGER

## Pen Set (kill set on land)

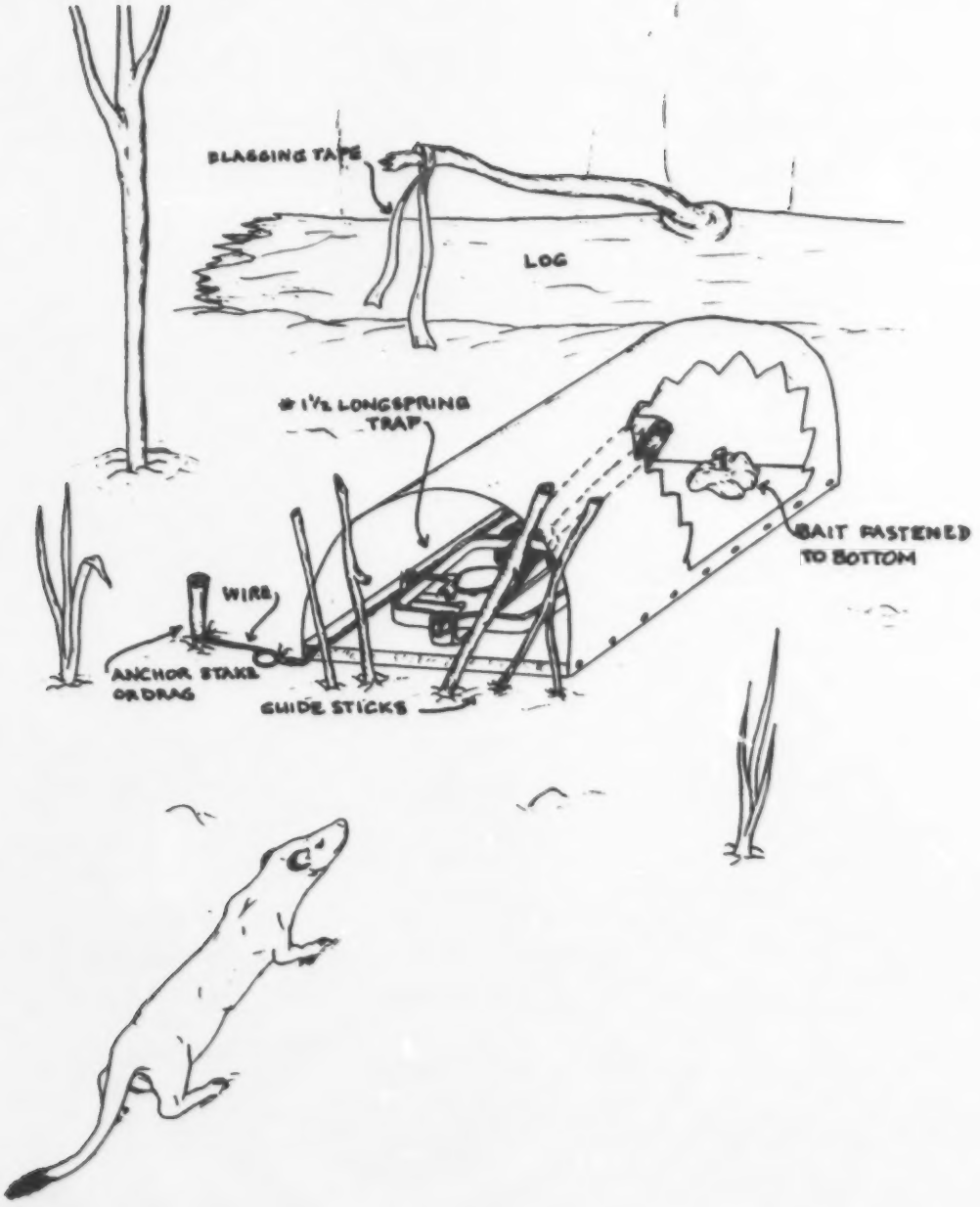


# WOLVERINE
## Log Cubby Set (kill set on land)

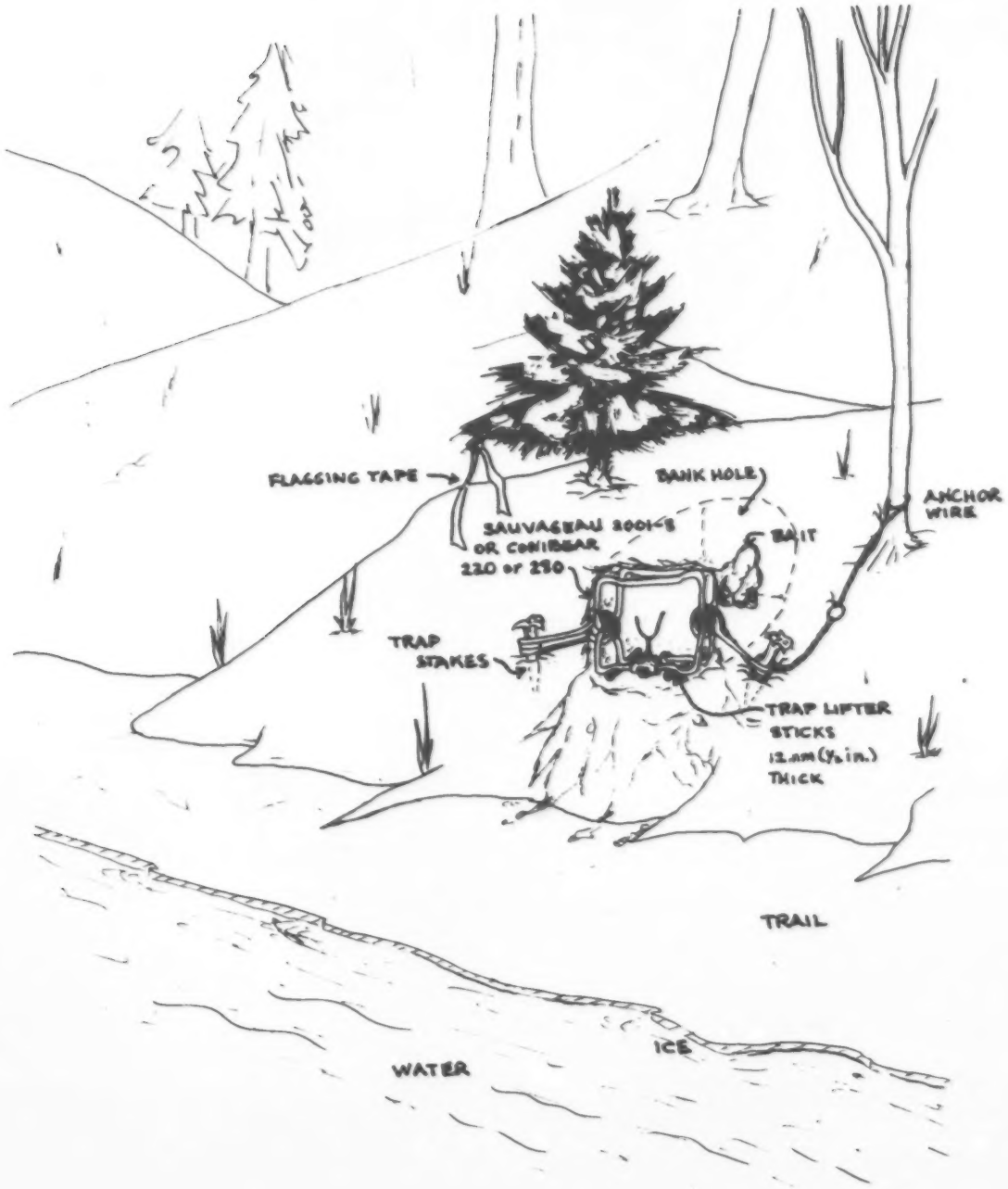


# WEASEL

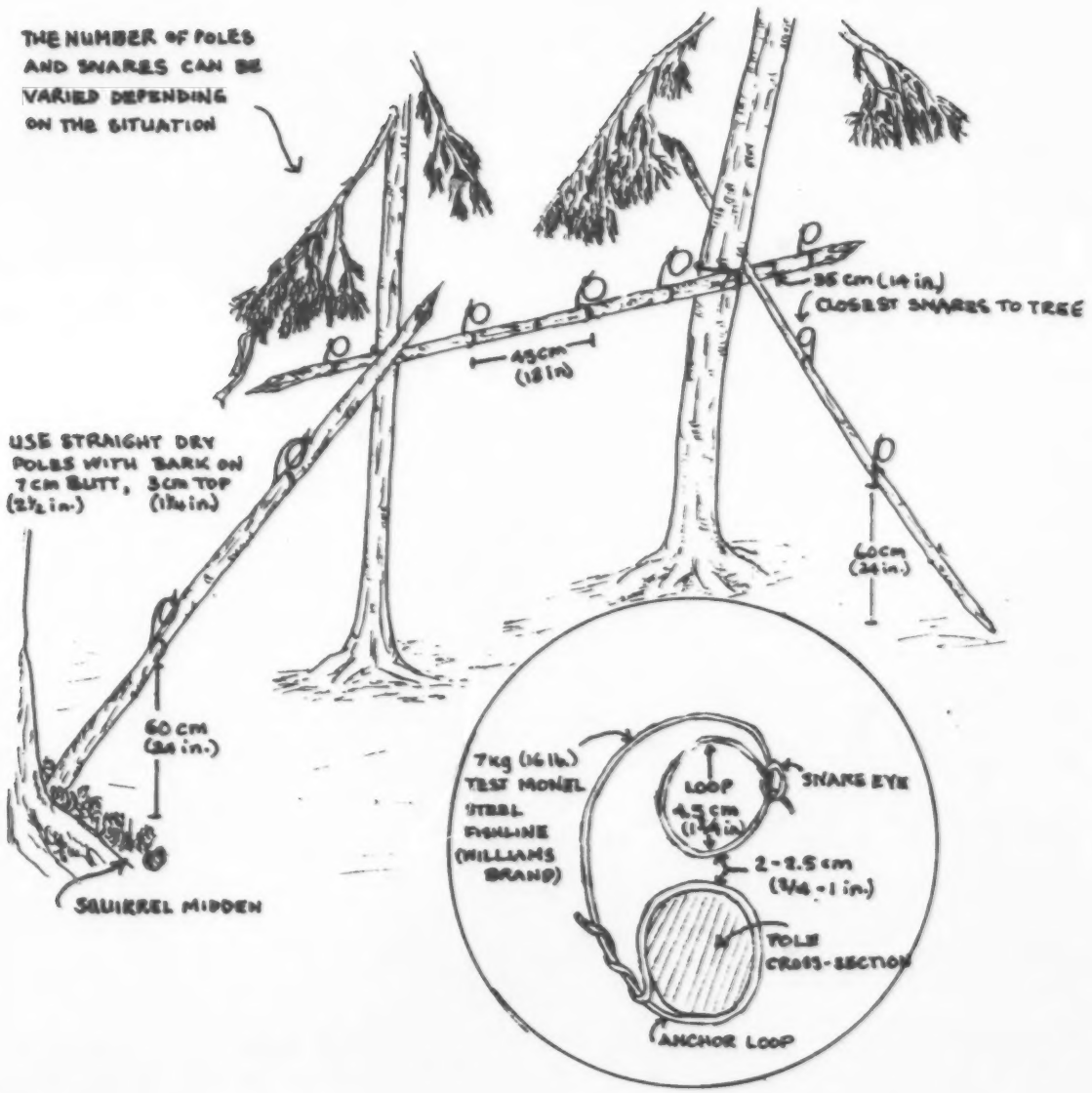
## Can Set (kill set on land)



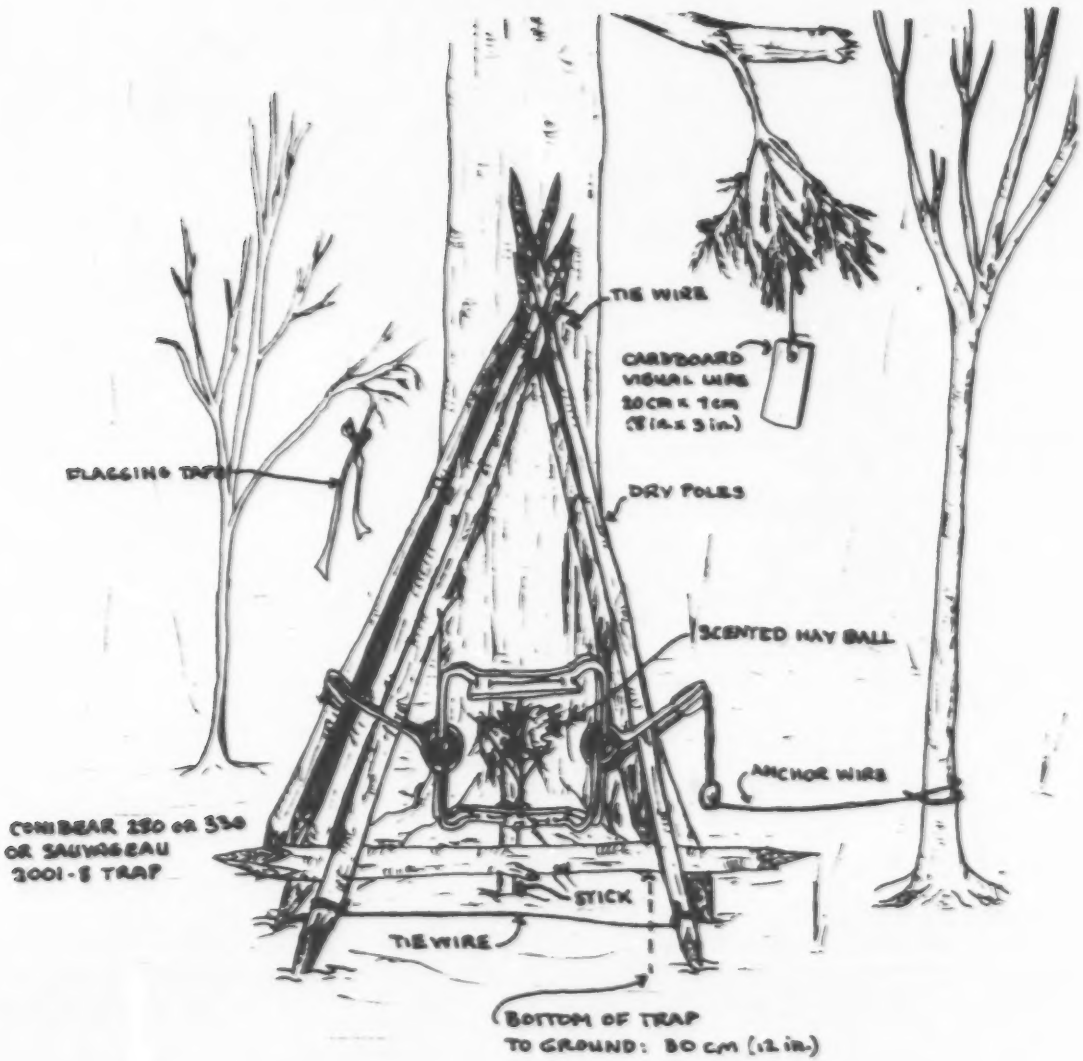
# RACCOON, SKUNK
## Bank Hole Set (kill set on land)



# SQUIRREL
## Snare Pole Set (kill set on land)

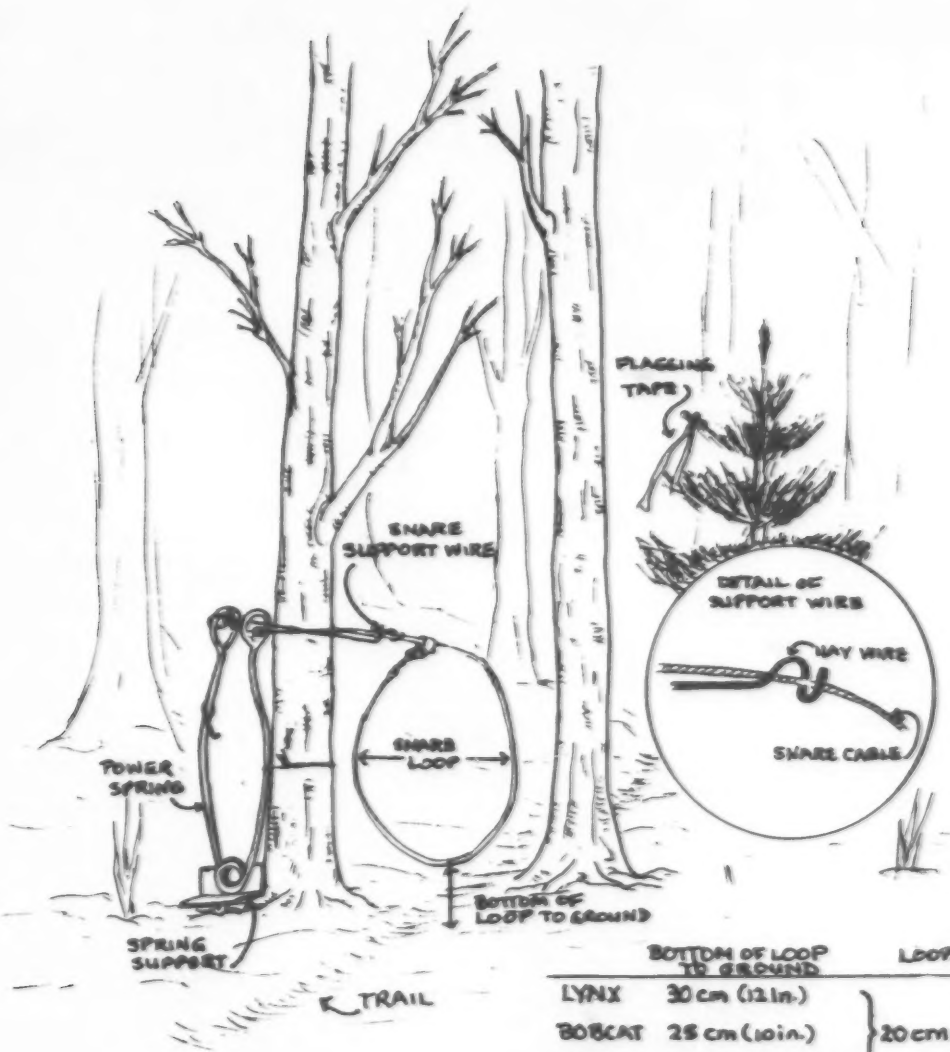

THE NUMBER OF POLES AND SNARES CAN BE VARIED DEPENDING ON THE SITUATION
35 cm (14 in.) CLOSEST SNARES TO TREE
45cm (18 in.)
USE STRAIGHT DRY POLES WITH BARK ON 7 cm BUTT, 3 cm TOP (2½ in.) (1¼ in.)
60cm (24 in.)
60 cm (24 in.)
SQUIRREL MIDDEN
7kg (16 lb.) TEST MONEL STEEL FISHLINE (WILLIAMS BRAND)
LOOP 4.5 cm (1¾ in.)
SNARE EYE
2 - 2.5 cm (¾ - 1 in.)
POLE CROSS-SECTION
ANCHOR LOOP

# LYNX, BOBCAT
## Teepee Cubby Set (kill set on land)


TIE WIRE
CARDBOARD VISUAL LURE 20 CM x 7 cm (8 in. x 3 in.)
FLAGGING TAPE
DRY POLES
SCENTED HAY BALL
ANCHOR WIRE
CONIBEAR 220 OR 330 OR SAUVAGEAU 2001-S TRAP
STICK
TIE WIRE
BOTTOM OF TRAP TO GROUND: 30 cm (12 in.)

# LYNX, BOBCAT, FOX, COYOTE, WOLF

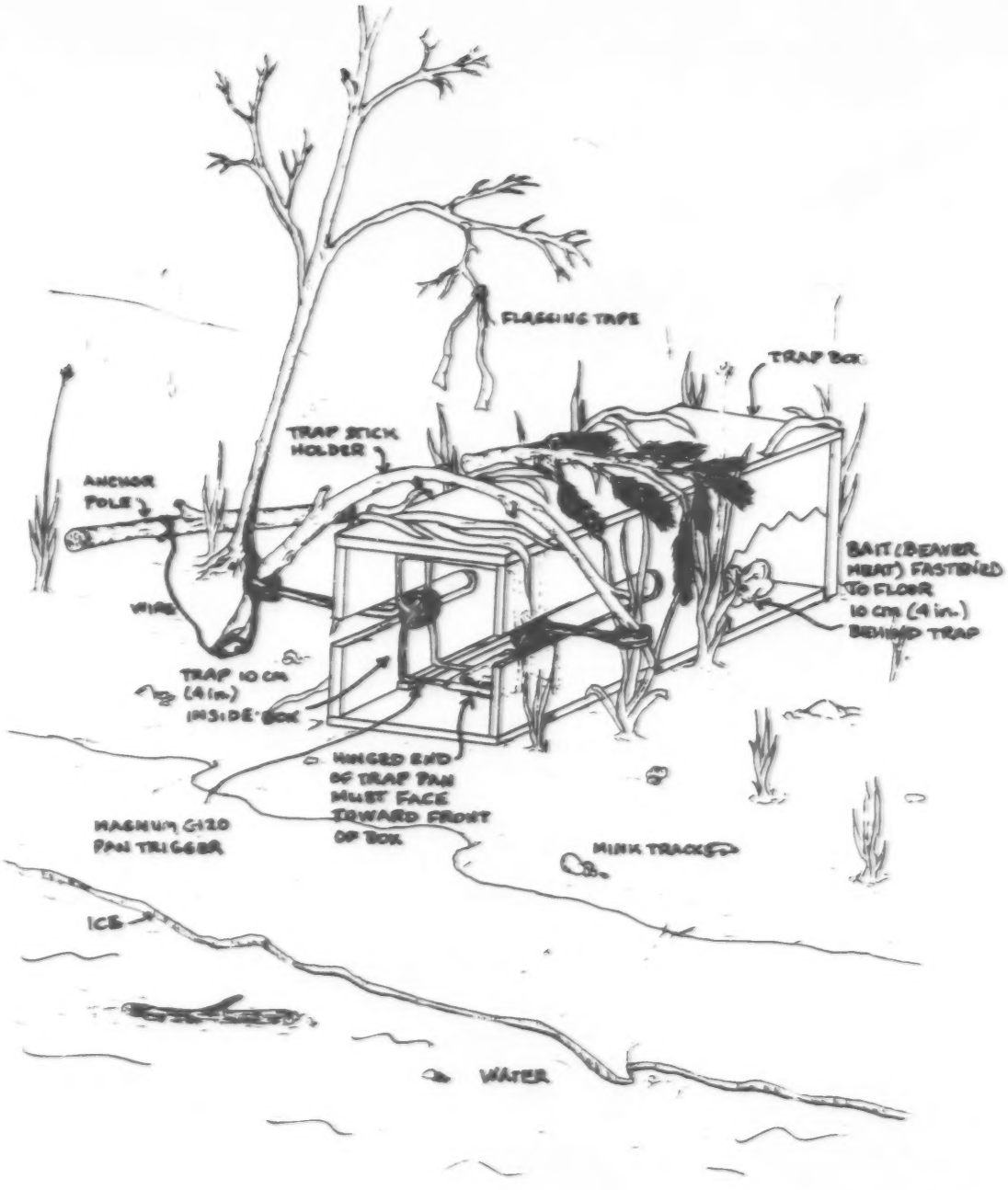
## Power Snare Set (kill set on land)




| | BOTTOM OF LOOP TO GROUND | LOOP SIZE | MODEL |
|---|---|---|---|
| LYNX | 30 cm (12 in.) | 20 cm (8 in.) | BERT RAH #2 |
| BOBCAT | 25 cm (10 in.) | | |
| FOX | 20 cm (8 in.) | | |
| COYOTE | 30 cm (12 in.) | 30 cm (12 in.) | BERT RAH #1 |
| WOLF | 40 cm (16 in.) | 35 cm (14 in.) | |

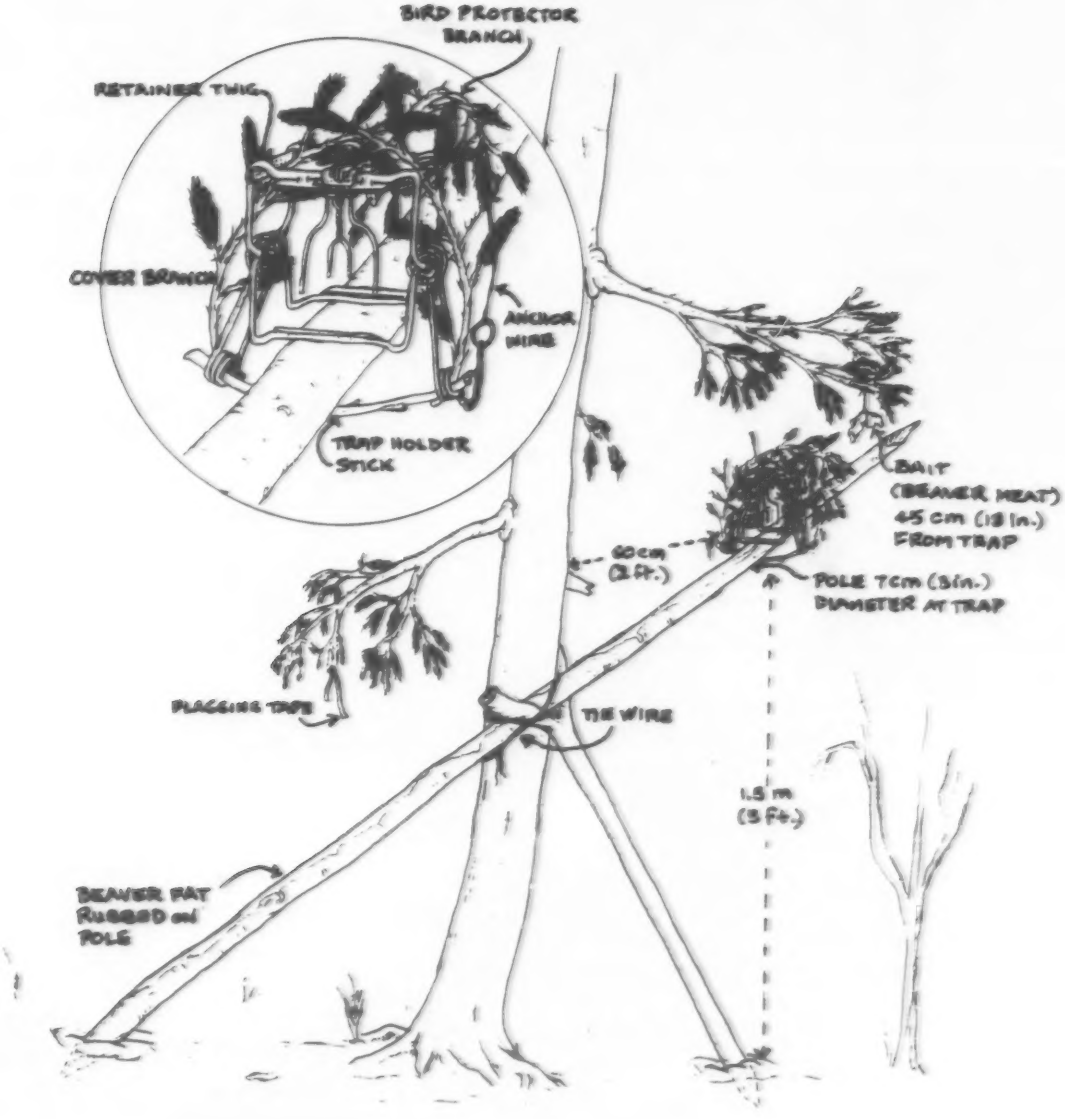
# MINK

## Box Set (kill set on land)

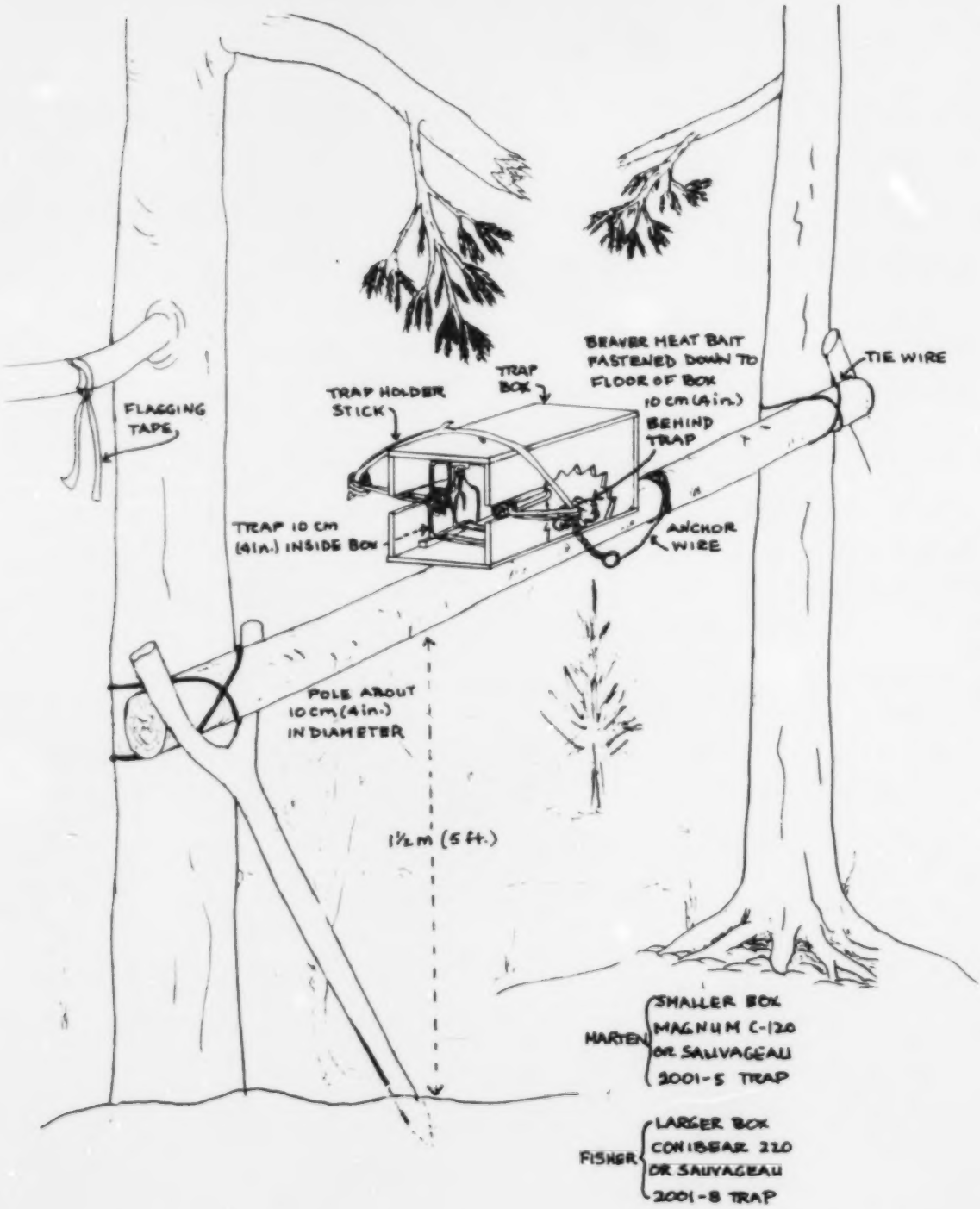

FLAGGING TAPE
TRAP BOX
TRAP STICK HOLDER
ANCHOR POLE
WIRE
BAIT (BEAVER MEAT) FASTENED TO FLOOR 10 cm (4 in.) BEHIND TRAP
TRAP 10 cm (4 in.) INSIDE BOX
HINGED END OF TRAP PAN MUST FACE TOWARD FRONT OF BOX
MAGNUM G120 PAN TRIGGER
MINK TRACKS
ICE
WATER

# MARTEN, FISHER
## Pole Set (kill set on land)

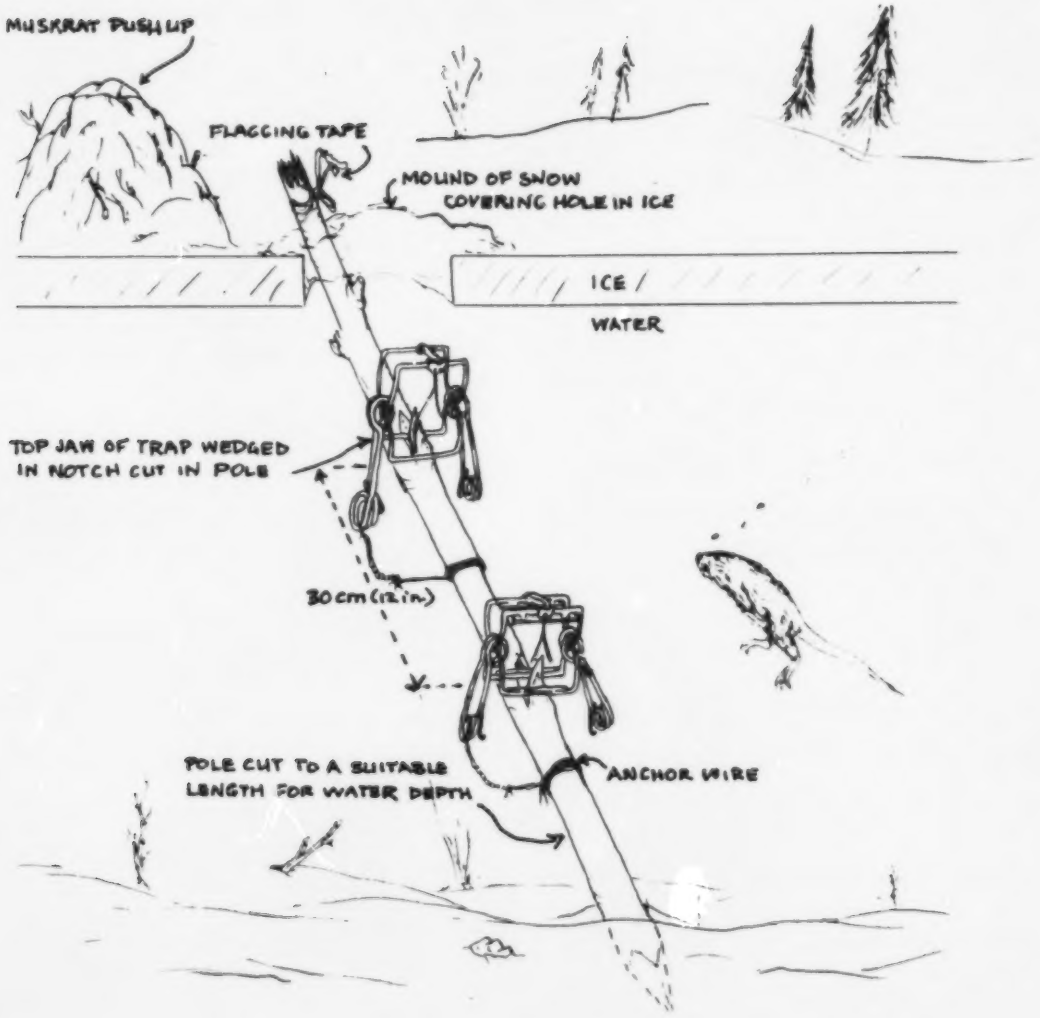
TRAP: SAUVAGEAU 2001-8 } FISHER
CONIBEAR 220 }
MAGNUM C-120 } MARTEN
SAUVAGEAU 2001-5 }



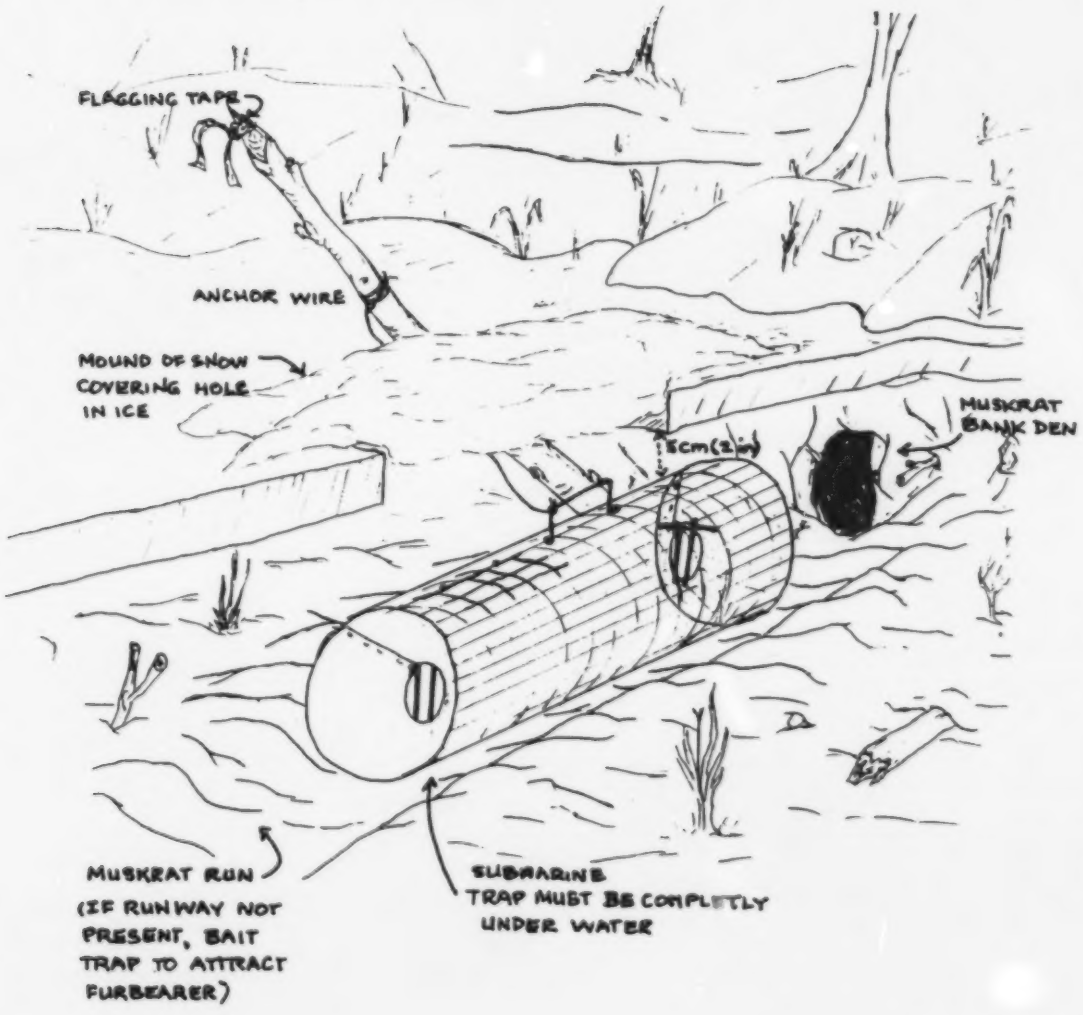
# MARTEN, FISHER
## Pole and Box Set (kill set on land)



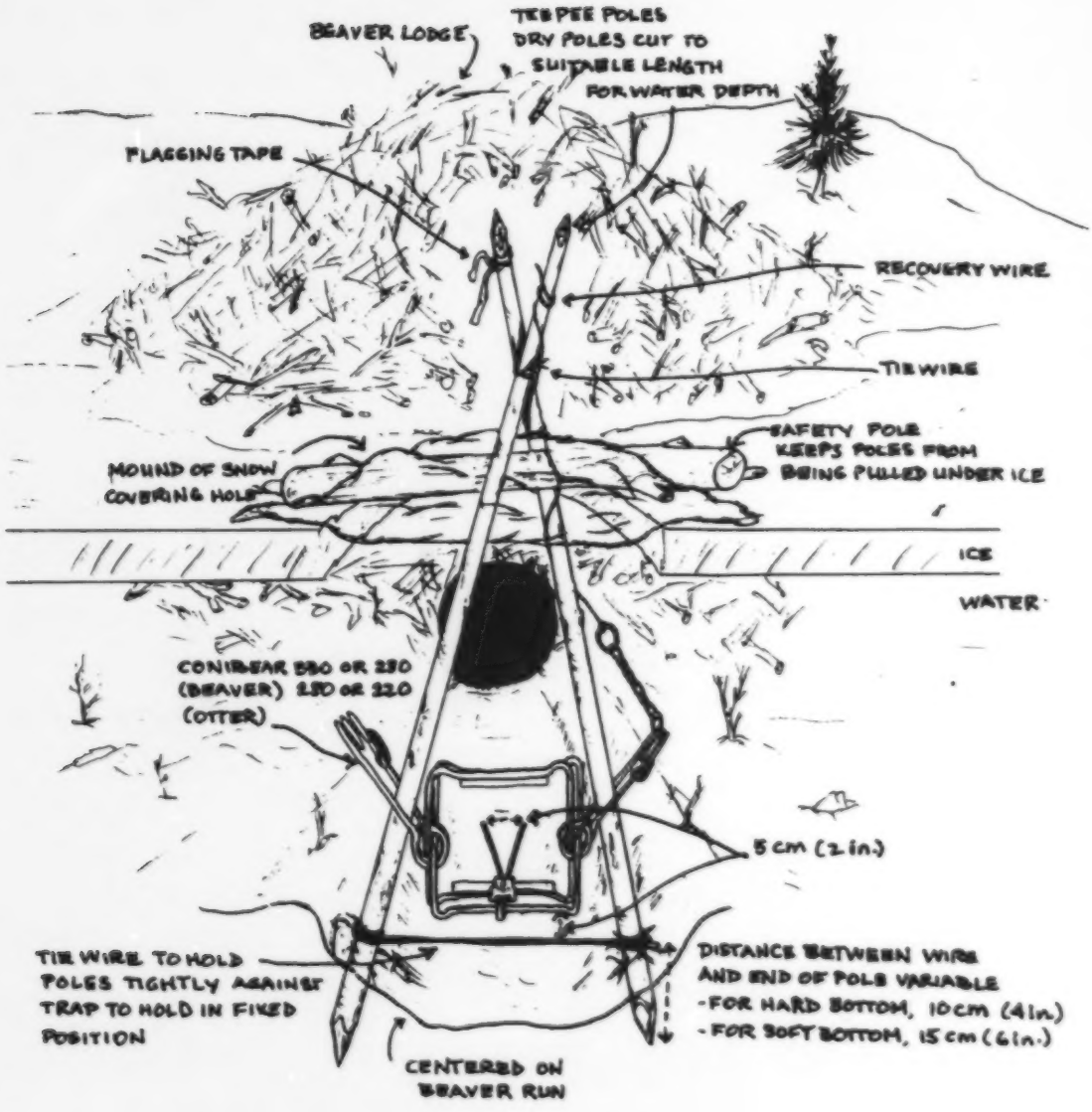
# MUSKRAT
## Under Ice Pole Set (kill set under water)


MUSKRAT PUSH UP
FLAGGING TAPE
MOUND OF SNOW COVERING HOLE IN ICE
ICE
WATER
TOP JAW OF TRAP WEDGED IN NOTCH CUT IN POLE
30 cm (12 in.)
POLE CUT TO A SUITABLE LENGTH FOR WATER DEPTH
ANCHOR WIRE

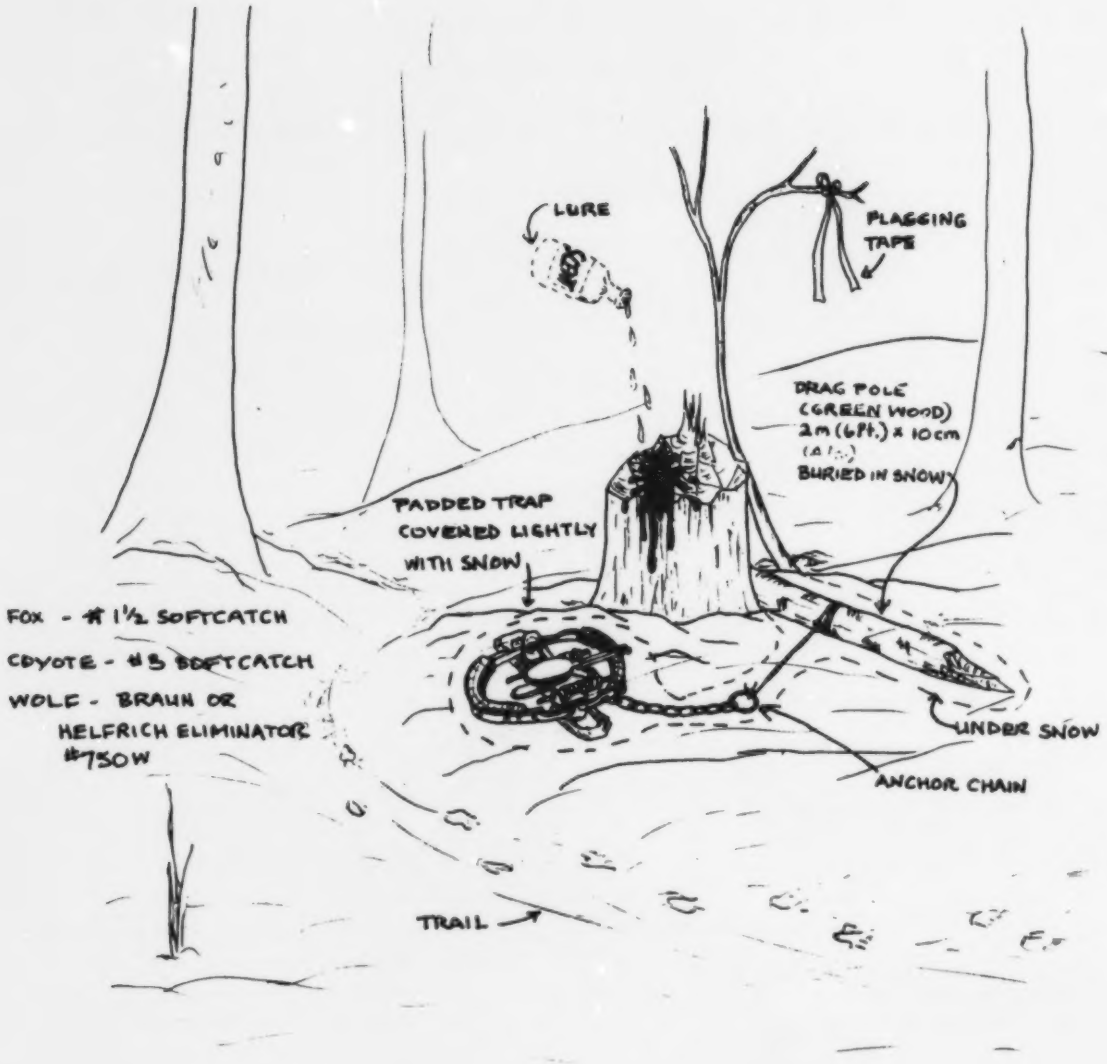
# MUSKRAT
## Submarine Set (kill set under water)


FLAGGING TAPE
ANCHOR WIRE
MOUND OF SNOW COVERING HOLE IN ICE
15cm (2 in)
MUSKRAT BANK DEN
MUSKRAT RUN (IF RUNWAY NOT PRESENT, BAIT TRAP TO ATTRACT FURBEARER)
SUBMARINE TRAP MUST BE COMPLETLY UNDER WATER

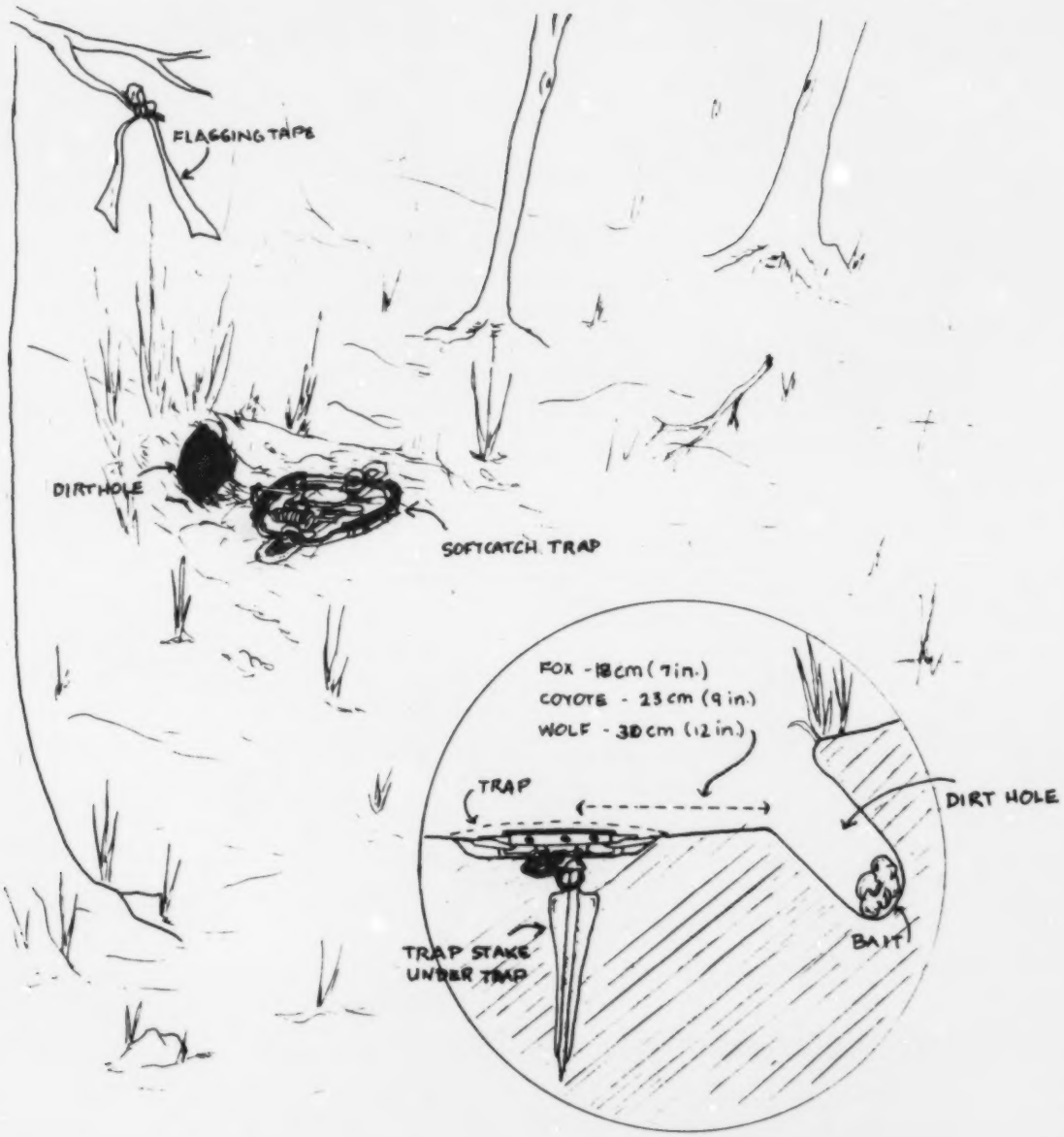
# BEAVER, OTTER
## Teepee Set (kill set under water)



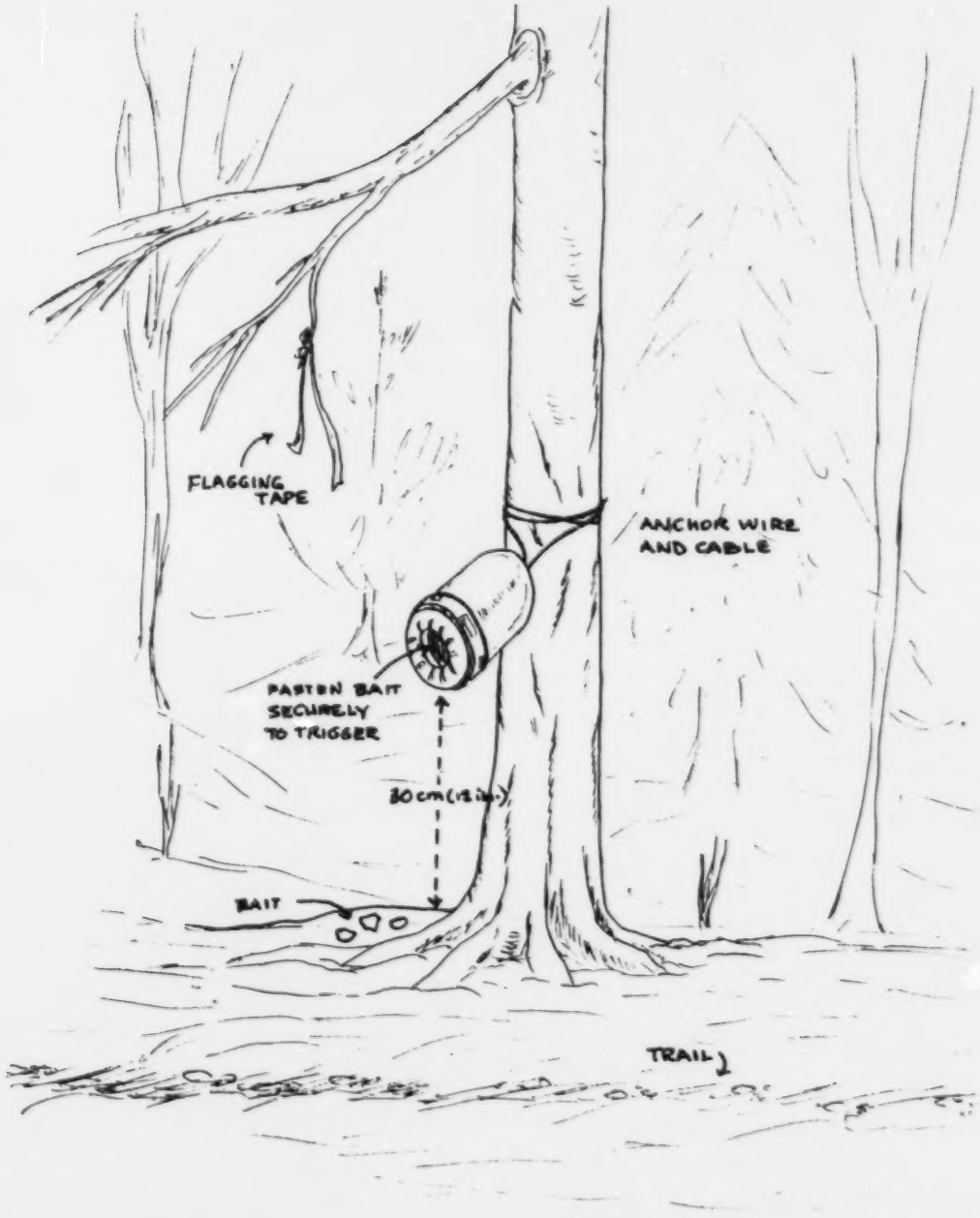
# FOX, COYOTE, WOLF
## Scent Post Set (restraining set on land)


LURE
FLAGGING TAPE
DRAG POLE (GREEN WOOD) 2m (6Ft.) x 10cm (4 In.) BURIED IN SNOW
PADDED TRAP COVERED LIGHTLY WITH SNOW
FOX - #1½ SOFTCATCH
COYOTE - #3 SOFTCATCH
WOLF - BRAUN OR HELFRICH ELIMINATOR #750W
UNDER SNOW
ANCHOR CHAIN
TRAIL

# FOX, COYOTE, WOLF
## Dirt Hole Set (restraining set on land)



# RACCOON
## Egg Trap Set (restraining set on land)



# REVIEW

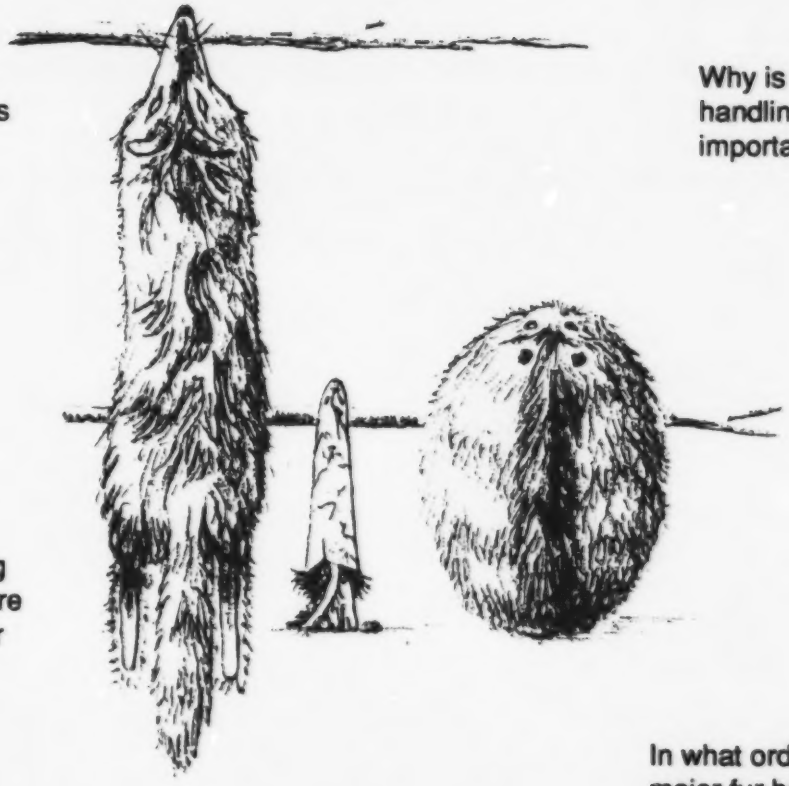
1. What is the definition of a humane death?
2. Name the three main areas that make up the wild fur manager's code of respect.
3. What are four signs of pain or stress of a captured animal?
4. Why is it necessary to control the approach of an animal into a kill type trap?
5. Give three examples of how to control approach.
6. Give two reasons for releasing a live furbearer from a restraining trap.
7. Give an example of how the location of a set can make it more humane.
8. Name two methods of releasing a live caught animal.
9. What size or calibre of gun is recommended for shooting a live caught furbearer?

# WILD FUR HANDLING

What are the three styles of pelt preparation?

What is fur handling?

What pelt preparation style is used for each furbearer?



Why is proper fur handling important?

What fur handling quality controls are desired by the fur industry?

In what order are the major fur handling steps performed?

What are normally the best months to market fur?

# OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this section you should be able to:

1. Correctly define the term "fur handling".
2. Give at least two reasons why proper fur handling is important.
3. Identify the main steps of wild fur handling in the proper order.
4. Recognize the three styles of pelt preparation and which style is used for each of the wild furbearers.
5. Identify the fur handling quality control items needed to meet the standard for preparation of any wild furbearer pelt.
6. Identify which are normally the best months to ship and/or market fur.
7. Recognize at least three health precautions recommended when handling wild furbearers.

# INTRODUCTION

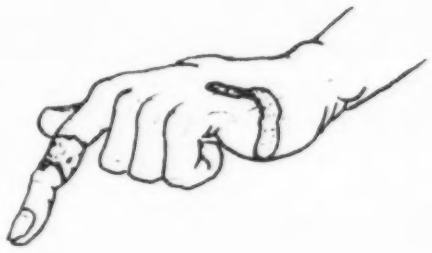
The importance of proper fur handling can hardly be overstressed. Proper handling of a pelt is necessary to prevent the waste of an animal's life and to get the highest price for the pelt.

Fur handling is a series of procedures carried out from the time the animal is captured to the time the pelt is sold. These steps are necessary to preserve, prepare and maintain the pelt of a furbearing animal in the form desired by the fur industry.

Described in this section are the main steps involved in handling wild furs, and the styles and standards of quality required to market the end product. The fur handler must constantly be aware that wild animals can carry diseases or parasites, therefore certain health precautions should be taken when handling these animals.

# HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

**Due to the danger of infection by various parasites and diseases which are found in wild furbearers, the following health precautions should be taken:**



Cover open cuts or sores on the hands or other exposed skin before starting to work on any animal.

Wear disposable rubber gloves.

After finishing work on any animal wash thoroughly in warm, soapy water.

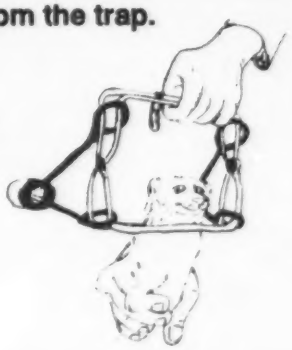
Where certain diseases are very common ask your doctor about receiving an inoculation.

# PELT PREPARATION - MAIN STEPS

## 1. PRE-SKINNING CARE

**a) Removal from the trap.**

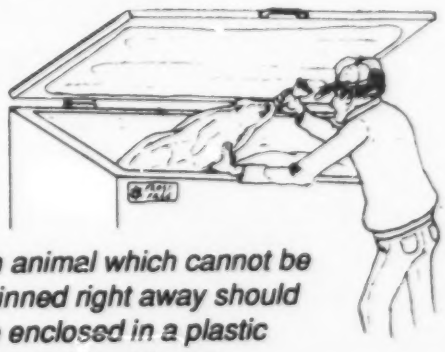
*Be careful not to damage the fur, especially if the animal is wet or frozen to the trap or ice.*



**b) Transporting the carcass**

*Be careful to protect the fur by enclosing it in a bag or tarp.*

**c) Pre-skinning storage** (if necessary)



*An animal which cannot be skinned right away should be enclosed in a plastic bag and kept frozen.*

**d) Pre-skinning thawing** (if necessary)

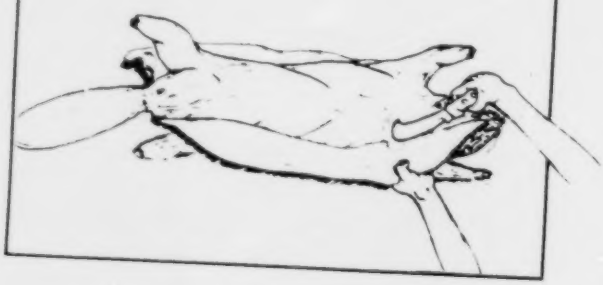
*The frozen animal should be hung up and allowed to thaw gradually until the skin can be easily removed.*

**e) Pre-skinning cleaning**

*Carefully comb or brush the fur (except for mink or otter)*

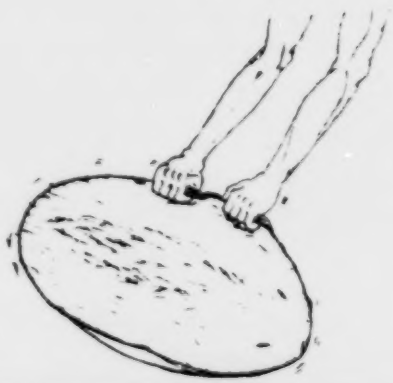
## 2. SKINNING

*Cased pelts should be carefully peeled off the carcass inside out like removing a sock. Open pelts should be split lengthwise down the centre of the belly and carefully skinned off the carcass.*



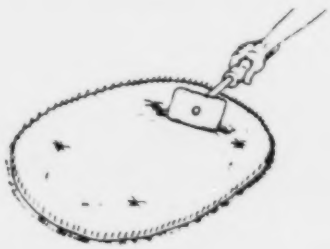
## 3. FLESHING

*Be sure all visible fat and flesh are removed. However, be careful not to damage the roots of the fur by overscraping. Wipe the skin side with warm water when finished.*



## 4. PRE-FORMING CARE

*Cased fur-out pelts should be washed if they are dirty or bloody. Pelts should be briskly "snapped" or shaken out to remove dirt.*



## 5. FORMING

*The pelt is formed by fitting it to the correct size and shape on a forming board and maintaining it in that shape until dry. Open pelts are nailed fur side down on a flat board and raised up 2.5 cm (1 in.) to dry. Cased fur-out pelts are turned inside-out (fur in) over the forming board until partially dry, then turned fur out again and left on the forming board to dry.*

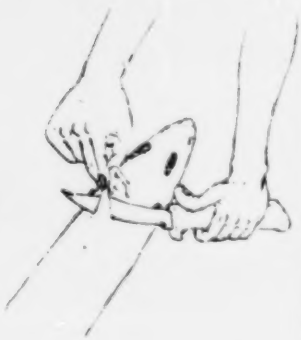
## 6. FINISHING

**a) Sewing**

*Sew any unwanted holes closed. Sew leg holes closed on beaver pelts.*

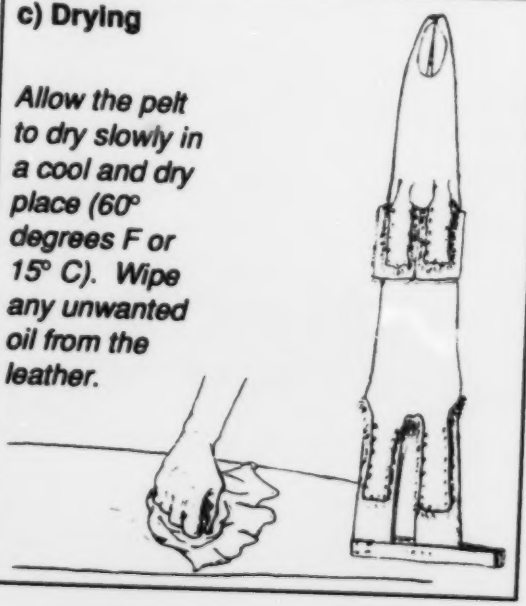
**b) Trimming**

*Carefully trim off bits of unwanted flesh or cartilage, and smooth jagged edges especially around mouth and nose.*



**c) Drying**

*Allow the pelt to dry slowly in a cool and dry place (60° degrees F or 15° C). Wipe any unwanted oil from the leather.*



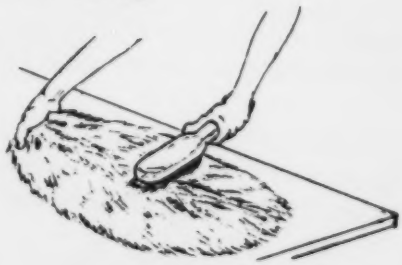
**d) Turning** (where necessary)

*Cased fur-out pelts must be turned fur out when partially dried then put back on the board to dry thoroughly.*

**e) Final removal from forming board**

*Carefully remove pelts from the forming board when completely dry.*

**f) Final cleaning**



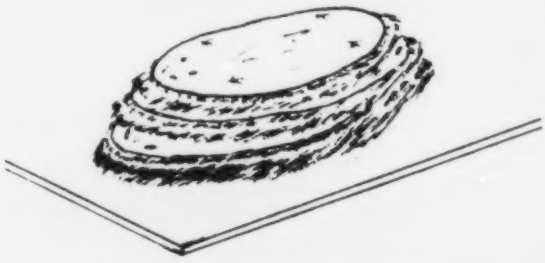
*Brush or comb the dry fur gently (except for mink and otter).*

## 7. STORAGE (if necessary)

*Pelts should be stored in a cool dry place, protected from vermin until ready to be shipped.*

*Stack open pelts fur to fur with largest on the bottom as shown.*

*Hang other pelts by the nose.*



## 8. SHIPPING

*Pack fur in a cardboard box or bag made of a woven, breathable material.*

*Be sure pelts are packed fur to fur and kept flat (not folded) if possible.*

*Two tags must be sent with each bag or box, one outside, one inside. Name, address, list of contents and licence number must be on the tags.*

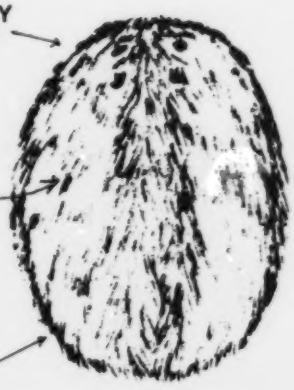
*The best months for marketing fur are normally December to February. Fur auctions require the fur about two weeks before the auction.*

# OPEN STYLE PELTS

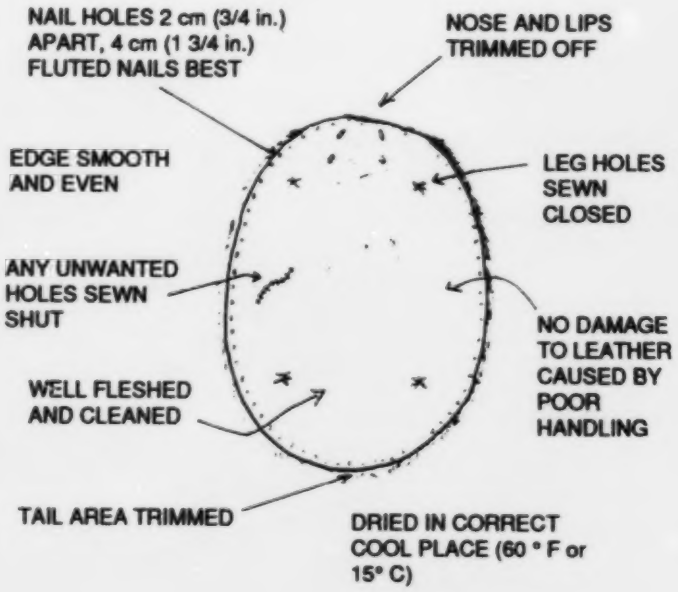
## BEAVER

**Quality control standard (as shown)**

**FUR SIDE**




**LEATHER SIDE**

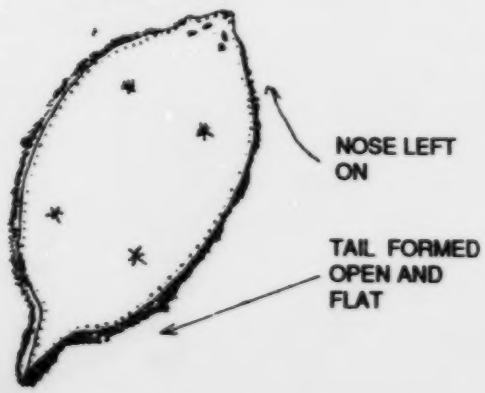

NAIL HOLES 2 cm (3/4 in.) APART, 4 cm (1 3/4 in.) FLUTED NAILS BEST
NOSE AND LIPS TRIMMED OFF
EDGE SMOOTH AND EVEN
LEG HOLES SEWN CLOSED
ANY UNWANTED HOLES SEWN SHUT
NO DAMAGE TO LEATHER CAUSED BY POOR HANDLING
WELL FLESHED AND CLEANED
TAIL AREA TRIMMED
DRIED IN CORRECT COOL PLACE (60 ° F or 15° C)

## BADGER

**Same quality control items as beaver except for differences shown**

**FUR SIDE**

**LEATHER SIDE**



# CASED STYLE PELTS (FUR IN)

**MINK**

**Quality control standard (as shown)**

**BELLY**

LIPS TRIMMED

BOTTOM JAW REMOVED

NO DAMAGE TO THE LEATHER CAUSED BY POOR HANDLING

FUR PROPERLY CLEANED

NO DAMAGE TO FUR CAUSED BY POOR HANDLING

WELL FLESHED AND CLEANED

PROPERLY DRIED IN A COOL PLACE (60° F or 15° C)

FRONT LEGS PROPERLY TRIMMED AND TUCKED IN

FORMED TO THE CORRECT SIZE AND SHAPE

UNWANTED HOLES SEWN SHUT

INSPECTION WINDOW

FUR NOT BRUSHED (MAY CAUSE SINGEING)

**BACK**

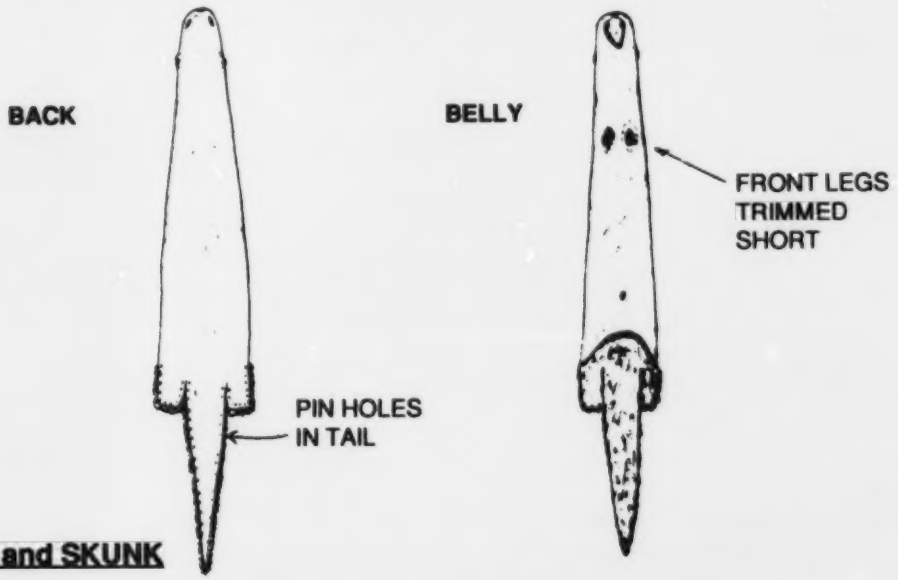
VERY SMALL PIN HOLES ON LEGS AND AT BASE OF TAIL ONLY

LEGS ON THE BACK, BESIDE THE TAIL

## CASED STYLE PELTS - FUR IN (continued)

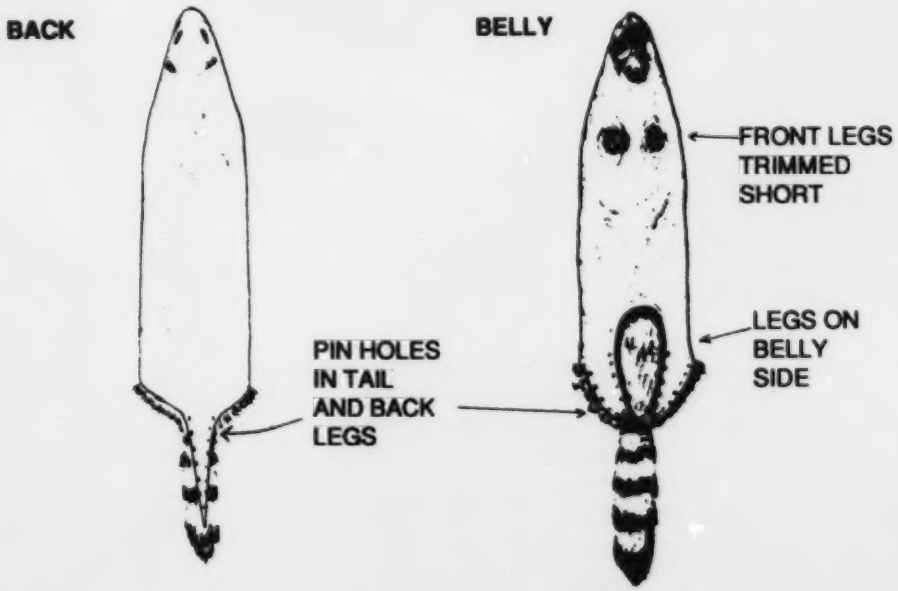
**OTTER**

**Same quality control items as mink except for differences shown**



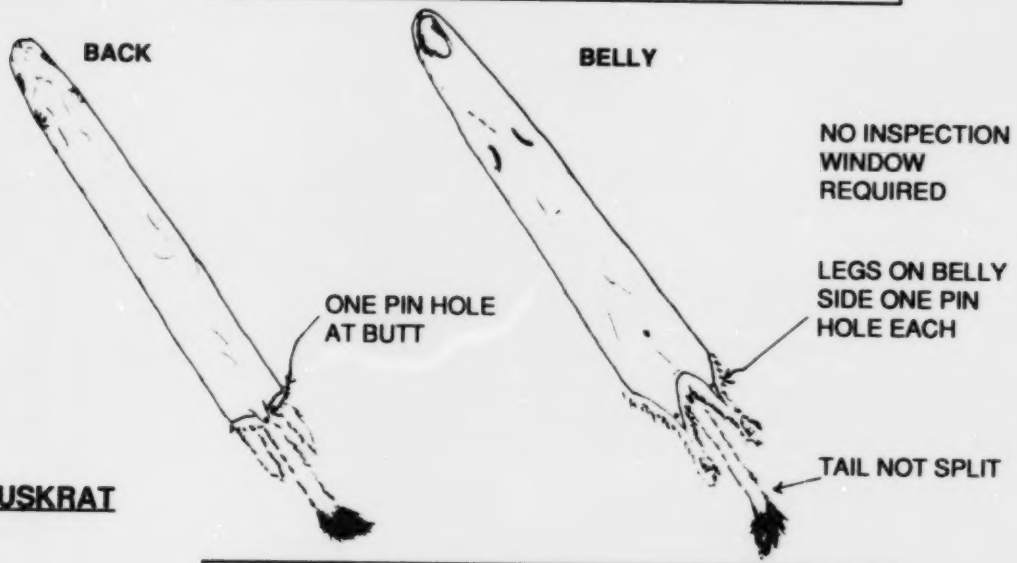

**RACCOON and SKUNK**

**Same quality control items as mink except for differences shown**



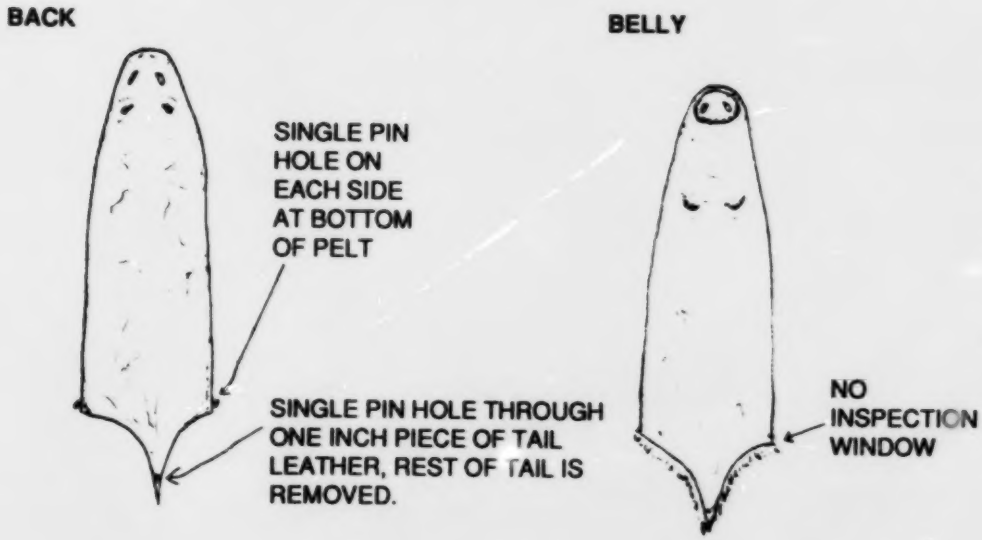
## WEASEL AND RED SQUIRREL

**Same quality control items as mink except for differences shown**




## MUSKRAT

**Same quality control items as mink except for differences shown**


BACK
BELLY
SINGLE PIN HOLE ON EACH SIDE AT BOTTOM OF PELT
SINGLE PIN HOLE THROUGH ONE INCH PIECE OF TAIL LEATHER, REST OF TAIL IS REMOVED.
NO INSPECTION WINDOW

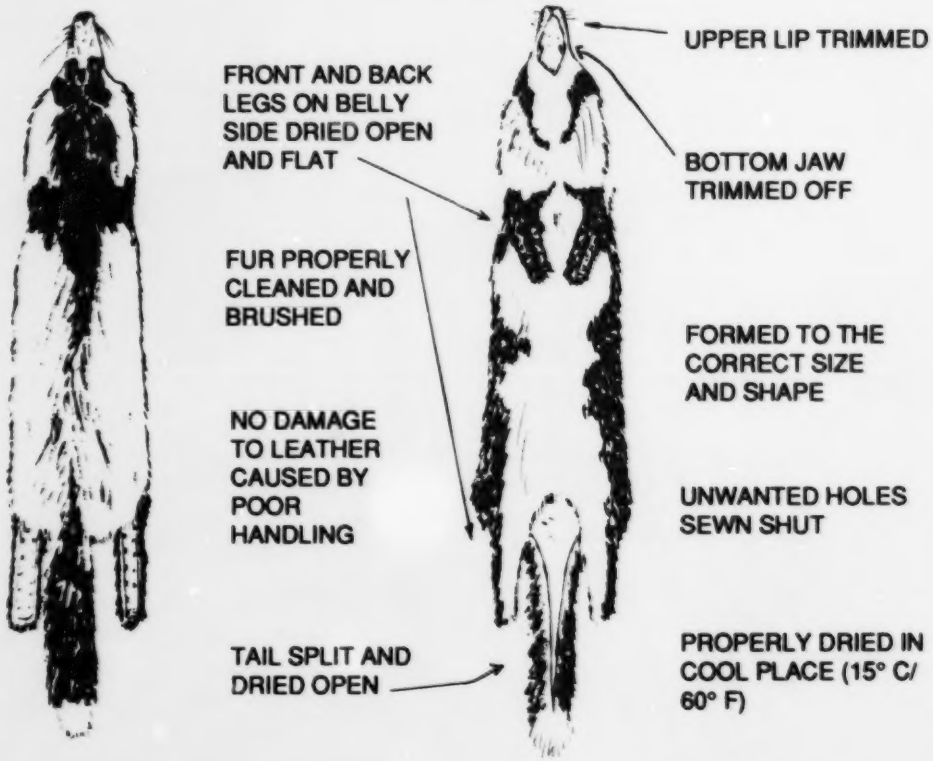
Wild Fur Handling

# CASED STYLE PELTS (FUR OUT)

## COYOTE, FOX, FISHER AND MARTEN

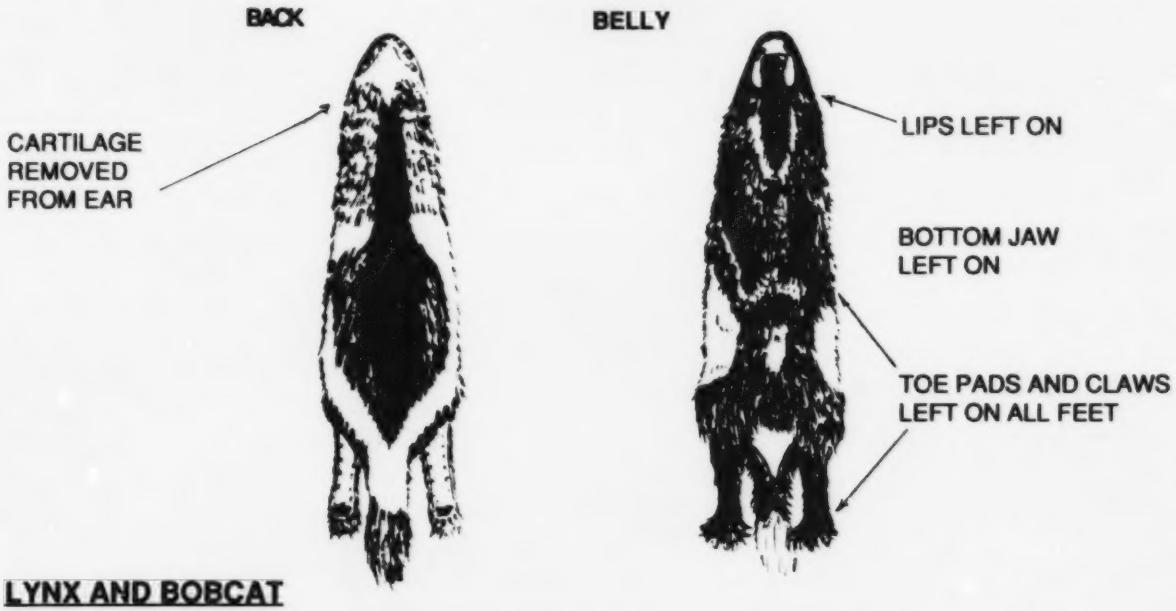
**Quality control standard (as shown)**

**BACK** **BELLY**


NO DAMAGE TO FUR CAUSED BY POOR HAN-DLING
FRONT AND BACK LEGS ON BELLY SIDE DRIED OPEN AND FLAT
FUR PROPERLY CLEANED AND BRUSHED
NO DAMAGE TO LEATHER CAUSED BY POOR HANDLING
TAIL SPLIT AND DRIED OPEN
UPPER LIP TRIMMED
BOTTOM JAW TRIMMED OFF
FORMED TO THE CORRECT SIZE AND SHAPE
UNWANTED HOLES SEWN SHUT
PROPERLY DRIED IN COOL PLACE (15° C/ 60° F)
WELL FLESHED AND CLEANED

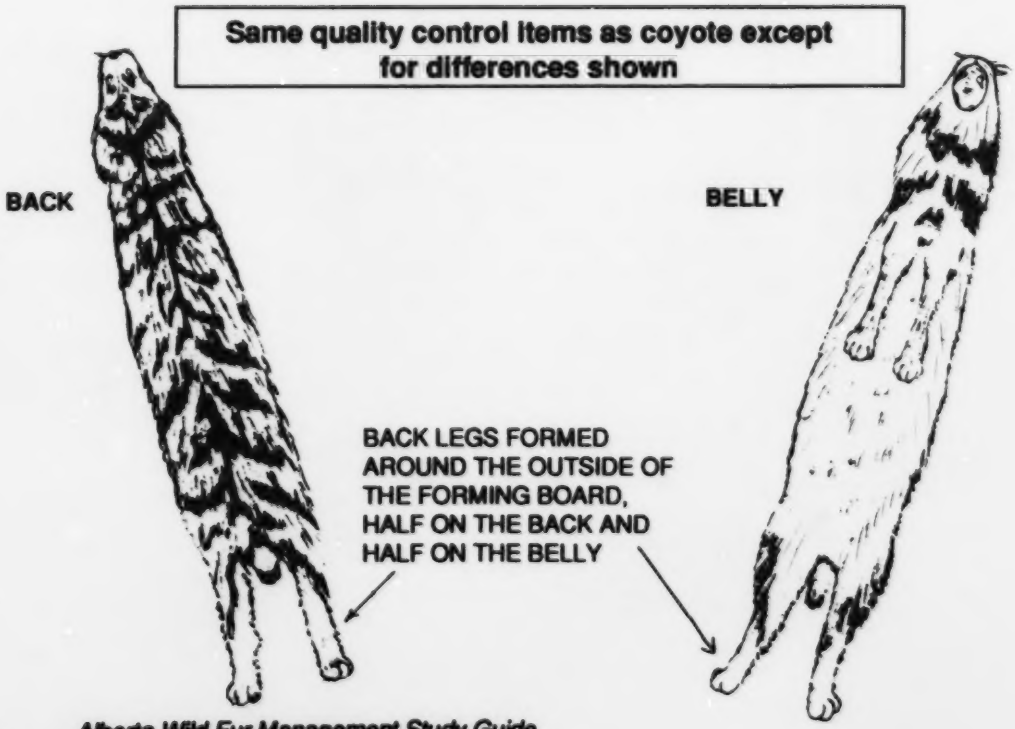
## WOLF AND WOLVERINE

**Same quality control items as coyote except for differences shown**




## LYNX AND BOBCAT

**Same quality control items as coyote except for differences shown**



# REVIEW

1. Why should open cuts or sores on hands be covered or protected before handling wild furs?

2. In what style is a squirrel pelt prepared?

3. What handling steps are involved in the "finishing" of pelts?

4. What handling steps come just before the "forming" step?

5. What are four "quality control items" used to set the standard for a beaver pelt?

6. What furbearer pelts are prepared cased "fur in"?

7. What furbearer pelts are prepared cased "fur out"?

# GLOSSARY

**accessory equipment**—any extra equipment used in wild fur area operations other than capture and fur handling equipment
**aerial (photos)**—photographs taken from the air
**ambush**—to lie in wait for prey and attack by surprise
**aquatic (plants)**—vegetation growing in or at the edge of water
**boreal (forest)**—of the north
**burrow**—to dig a hole, or the hole dug as a den by foxes, badger etc.
**canine (teeth)**—long, curved teeth under the eye of the dog family, also called eyeteeth
**capture device**—anything that is used to catch an animal
**carnasial (teeth)**—shearing teeth
**carnivore (carnivorous)**—meat-eating animals
**carrion**—dead, rotting flesh
**cased style pelt**—the skin of a furbearer cut open on the hind end only and is dried like a sock
**castor**—smell-producing gland taken from beaver, used as a lure
**coniferous**—evergreen, cone-bearing trees
**cubby**—a snug enclosure with a doorway to control the approach of a furbearer, a trap box
**dam**—barrier built by beaver to stop the flow of water
**den**—cave or hole used as a shelter by some furbearers
**domestic (animals)**—animals which are not wild, such as cattle or sheep
**dugout**—man-made pond
**flesher**—tool used to scrape flesh off the inside leather of a fur
**fleshing beam**—a smooth tapered and rounded surface to support the pelt while fat and flesh are removed
**forming board**—flat surface used for forming pelts
**fur handling**—all the steps required to protect and prepare a pelt for market, from the time the animal is captured until the pelt is sold
**fur management licence**—a document issued by a regulatory agency that permits the capture of wild furbearers
**fur-in pelts**—pelts prepared with the fur on the inside and the leather out
**fur-out pelts**—pelts prepared with the leather inside, fur outside
**furbearer**—animals having fur with market value
**gestation**—pregnancy; time from conception to birth
**habitat**—all the natural elements a furbearing animal requires in order to live
**herbivore (herbivorous)**—plant-eating animals
**humane death**—to quickly render an animal irreversibly unconscious until death
**humane**—to treat with compassion
**incisors**—cutting teeth in the front of the mouth, as in beaver
**kill threshold**—the point beyond which death occurs in an animal
**kill type trap**—a trap with striking and clamping force, designed to kill the captured furbearer
**killing snare**—a snare to catch a furbearing animal by the neck
**laterally**—side-wise (from the side)

**lodge**—a hollow mound of sticks and earth built by beaver as a dwelling place
**lure**—anything used to entice an animal toward a trap
**maximum**—the largest amount, quantity, size, etc.
**midden**— squirrels feed cache and refuse heap
**monogamous**—having only one mate
**odour producing (glands)**—glands of the weasel family which produce an offensive smell when the animal is alarmed
**open style pelt**—a skin that is split lengthwise along the belly and is dried open and flat with the fur on one side, leather on the opposite side
**pelt fleshing tools**—any tools used to remove flesh from the leather side of a skin
**pelt style**—the pattern in which furbearing animal pelts are prepared for market
**polygamous**—having more than one mate at a time
**power killing snare**—a snare designed to catch a furbearing animal by the neck; the noose is tightened by springs on the snare
**prohibitions**—regulations that do not allow certain practises
**quota**—a set number of furbearers to be harvested
**raw pelt**—a skin that is either fresh or dried but has not been tanned
**restraining trap**—a trap designed to hold the furbearer alive
**revenue**—money earned
**rotund**—rounded, plump
**safety hook (safety gripper)**—tool used to hold the jaw of a trap open
**scavenger**—animal which cleans up the kills of other animals
**season**—a period of time during which furbearers can be legally captured
**strategies**—plans and procedures
**strike zone**—the area on a furbearer where the killing bars of a kill type trap strike and clamp
**target animal**—a furbearing animal intended for capture
**terrain**—countryside, land
**tufts**—closely-grouped hairs which stand up on the ear tips of lynx and bobcat
**vegetarian**—animals which eat plant matter only
**vermin**—harmful insects etc. which can damage pelts in storage

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